NEUROOMIA:

A NEW CONTINENT

BY G. McIVER

GEORGE ROBERTSON AND CO.

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G. McIVER.

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PREFACE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the occasional references in this little work to systems and forms of government, it was not intended by the writer to have any political bias, his object being merely to relate the adventures of the hero of the story in another land. In doing this, however, he found it necessary to describe briefly the state of affairs existing in the New Continent, and to compare its people and the conditions under which they lived with those of our own.

G. M. I.

NAMBUCCA RIVER,
NEW SOUTH WALES,
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CHAPTER I.

A VOYAGE TO THE SOUTHERN SEAS.

We left Hobart on the 30th November, 1889, in our loved ship, the *Penguin*, bound for the Southern Seas, with which, by the way, we were well acquainted, having been successfully whaling for several years in those parts; so that each of us had already accumulated a small fortune. On this occasion it was our intention to penetrate farther to the south than we had formerly done, and, if possible, to make fresh discoveries. We felt quite satisfied that land existed to the far south and in the vicinity of the Pole, for on previous voyages we had seen the tops of great volcanoes at various places along the horizon.

The wind for the most part was favourable, and we continued on our voyage for some weeks in a southerly direction.

The great fields of ice were evidently breaking up, for icebergs were floating about everywhere.

We had now to be very careful of our vessel, and proceed with the greatest caution. We sighted volcanoes in the distance, but, owing to the icebergs, were unable to make much headway, being sometimes almost stationary for weeks at a time. Nevertheless, we were in the highest spirits, and the scene was cheerful; the sun remained constantly above the horizon, and marine animals and seabirds were seen in every direction. Myriads of seals seemed tireless in their activity, and the cries of seabirds, great and small, in many instances not unmusical, broke the silence of those otherwise tranquil regions. Albatrosses, penguins, and sea-gulls of endless variety were in the greatest abundance, and animals and birds appeared so intensely happy that it was evident they had not always been accustomed to such congenial surroundings.

Nor was the whole without its effect upon us, for although the summer was already far advanced, we could get no farther to the south, and yet we had no desire to return north without accomplishing anything; so we waited on somewhat undecided, knowing that our best course was to leave early, as we neither wished nor intended to pass a winter in those parts.

Once, indeed, it appeared as if we could reach the land with our vessel; the ice broke up rapidly, channels were numerous, and we were making good progress, when all at once it became intensely cold, and winter set in with a suddenness that astounded us, who were accustomed to the changes of those latitudes.

Our ship, which was now within half a mile of the land, became enclosed on all sides and underneath with compact ice.

The sun made his appearance only at long intervals, and it was plain that the long polar night was approaching. The time he remained above the horizon became less, till before very long we did not see him at all. It was night now, but not dark, like the nights in other parts of the world; indeed, it seemed an everlasting twilight.

We made several trips on the ice to the land, the surface of which we found to be very much broken, mountains and hills being numerous. Some were active volcanoes, others frozen over, but others again were quite free from ice, and covered with a hardy kind of vegetation. We attributed this latter phenomenon to subterranean heat. On climbing several of the hills, we noticed that just above the horizon the sky was always of a red colour,

which, however, kept constantly changing. Sometimes it would appear of a bright red, then portions of it would become obscured by dark patches these in turn to give way to a paler red or crimson. Of course we did not know, but we conjectured that beyond where we were standing there was probably more land and more sea.

The winter was long, dreary, and monotonous; still, the prospect of being able to explore the land and neighbouring seas during the next summer kept us in good cheer. We had plenty of provisions, and felt quite satisfied that we could weather the remainder of this desolate season; yet at times we could not help feeling uneasy, for the nearest volcano, which was only about three-quarters of a mile distant from our ship, became continually more and more active, the thundering louder and more frequent, and the flames ascended higher into the heavens. We did not feel at all safe, and began to seriously consider the idea of leaving the ship and forming a camp on the land, at a greater distance away from the cause of our trouble.

We felt confident the ice was becoming thinner, and had already dissolved beneath the vessel. So it was arranged to hold a council of the whole

crew, in order to discuss the unpleasant situation. We had not, however, proceeded far with the matter, when we were interrupted by a loud crash, and the *Penguin* was swung completely round, as if she had been a mere bubble. We all lost our feet, but the first mate fared badly. He happened to be sitting carelessly on the bulwark, chewing tobacco, and ridiculing the idea of even temporarily leaving the vessel, when he was suddenly tossed high into the air, spun round a few times, turned upside down, and then disappeared, but not before he had invoked a few blessings on the volcano in his usual rhetorical style. Meanwhile the *Penguin* rose and sank, heaved and travelled, varying the motion occasionally by spinning round. The thundering and crashing increased, and steam issued from the water in several places.

We now began to travel rapidly in one direction towards the south, and it soon became clear that we were in a current of hot water, which carried the *Penguin* along smoothly and quickly in a south-easterly direction. The current was only a few chains wide, yet we were quite helpless to do anything, and on we must go, the sky in front becoming redder as we advanced. Whither we were going I knew not. However, I noticed with regret

that some of the crew were missing. The few that were left became, like myself, hardened and indifferent; still, the rate at which we were travelling had something to do with raising our spirits, and we cheered one another. How long and how far we were borne in this manner I cannot say, for the current was tortuous and the rate of speed unequal. After a time, however, the stream became weaker and the vessel began to move more slowly, with compact ice on either side.

We were now apparently approaching strange regions, for the scene in front was one not to be forgotten. The sky problem was solved. A great chain of active volcanoes stretched east and west as far as the eye could reach, belching bolts of fire, flames, and clouds of ashes high up into the air, while streams of molten lava poured down their sides. The mountains, sea, and sky had a peculiar lurid glare, and we could see a long distance. The noise at first was deafening, but we got accustomed to it. The flames from a thousand peaks ascended to an enormous height, swaying to and fro with the frequent gusts of wind, and at the same time raining showers of cinders, stones, and ashes into the water at the foot of the range. The current carried us across a cinder-covered channel of open

water, which stretched along the base of the mountains into a long, narrow, winding inlet that appeared to run towards the interior. In some places the stream was rapid, and we were hurled and tossed on at a great rate of speed. The farther we travelled inland, we noticed that the volcanoes became fewer, and this gave us some degree of consolation; but, on the other hand, we began to wonder where this stream might lead to, when we saw a sight in front, which, hardened as we were, filled us with terror.

A small circular lake, surrounded by high hills, with a great whirlpool in the centre, was only a little distance ahead. Pieces of wood and other things carried down by the current were being swiftly hurled round and round the lake—all, however, making their way to the vortex, and disappearing for ever. What was to be done? A few minutes more, and we should be in the lake. In a moment I hitched a large iron hook to the end of a rope, and threw it ashore among the brambles and rocks. Fortunately it caught, and we were safe. Then, going on land, we made the rope fast; still the *Penguin* was in the current, whereas, if we could only manage to get her to the opposite side, she would be beyond its influence. This,

however, we managed after some delay, by means of ropes and hooks; then, finding a broader channel of still water leading away from the current, we steered the vessel into it. The wind at times was favourable, and we got a considerable distance away from the volcanoes. The inlet now, however, began to turn in a northerly direction, so we commenced to search for a suitable place to leave the ship, with a view to explore the country on foot. Having found a broad, lagoon-like sheet of water nearly enclosed by the land, we made the *Penguin* secure, and began to make arrangements for a trip into the interior. It was agreed that one of the crew and myself should go inland to examine the territory, while the remaining three were to stay with the vessel and await our return.

From what we had already seen, we felt sure the climate would become more temperate as we advanced, and in this we were not disappointed.

My mate was Septimus Robinson, the most daring and hardy of all the crew. He was about thirty years of age, tall, muscular, well built, and what is known as a silent man; indeed, I felt that with him I should be able to overcome all difficulties.

The sun was always shining, water was plentiful,

and having armed ourselves with guns and ammunition, and taking as much provisions as we could conveniently carry, we set out on our journey. Concerning provisions, however, we did not from the first feel the slightest apprehension, for birds of a kind I had never seen before were plentiful, and so tame that we could easily pick them off the trees with the hand. They had in all probability never seen a human being before.

The country was very rugged and broken, so we travelled along the passes, whenever we could find them; but frequently we had to clamber over the mountain ranges the best way we could. We crossed range after range, running nearly parallel to one another, and gradually going higher and higher, the chain presenting its steep acclivities to us. From this we knew that the slope on the opposite side would probably be more gradual, if we could only manage to get there. We could not measure time by day and night, for it was always day. So we walked till we became exhausted, then ate, slept, ate again, and went on. We found the appearance of the country changed as we proceeded: vegetation was becoming more dense and varied, the trees taller, and small animals more numerous. The undergrowth and vines now began

to give us trouble, and on one occasion it took us a considerable time to reach the top of a lofty range.

On arriving there, we had the mortification to see immediately in front a still higher and steeper one, with a long, dark, longitudinal valley, through which a torrent roared intervening. Turning my head somewhat impatiently from the scene to the plump face of Septimus, I was surprised to notice the concerned look there; however, it was only for a moment, and I soon dispelled the idea, if indeed I ever entertained it, of Septimus Robinson being afraid. We decided to rest here for a time, and commenced to prepare our meal, Septimus in the meantime remarking, in a casual manner, that our supply of tea and sugar was getting low. The meal being over, we lit our pipes and had a smoke, then slept, as was our custom, on our backs in the shade of a tree, with the hat drawn over the eyes, and legs crossed. How long I slept I cannot say; probably longer than usual, for I was very tired. But judge my astonishment, on waking, to find Septimus missing. I looked carefully about, in the hope that he might be still in the neighbourhood, and even shouted out to him. However, it soon became evident that Septimus

Adolphus Robinson had "sneaked," and had also "sneaked" the tea and sugar and whatever remained of the provisions we had taken from the ship.

CHAPTER II.

CAPTAIN PERIWINKLE REACHES A NEW CONTINENT.

I FELT despondent and annoyed for some little time. However, I consoled myself with the idea that there was no use reflecting, so I took up my knife and "billy" (we had abandoned the guns, etc., some time previously), and having filled and lit my pipe, began to descend. I soon managed to reach the river, but the difficulty now was how to get across, for it was very wide and deep, and far too rapid to swim; so I wandered up and down the bank in the hope of finding trees on the opposite sides whose branches met above the water. In this, however, I was disappointed; the nearest branches I could see were from ten to fifteen feet apart. I now scarcely knew what to do, so I sat down to consider the situation and examine the trees more closely. It was not long, however, before I heard a chattering noise behind me, and on looking round, was surprised to see a whole host of monkeys com-

ing down towards the water, near where I sat. Like all the animals and birds we had hitherto seen in this new land, they did not take the least notice of me. They stood on the bank and chattered for some time, and I could plainly see that they were on the same errand as myself, and intended to cross the river by the branches. After looking intently at a large tree leaning over the water, one of the strongest monkeys nimbly climbed it, going out on one of the horizontal branches as far as he deemed safe, then, hitching his tail round it, let his body hang down. A second followed, hitched his tail round the body of the first, and hung down. Others followed, and repeated the hitching process till a living string was formed that reached nearly to the surface of the water; then, by some muscular movements known to themselves, they began to sway to and fro like the pendulum of a clock, going a little farther each time, till the monkey at the end managed to get hold of a branch on the opposite side. He then climbed along it for some distance, and the suspension bridge was complete. The mothers and young ones now began to cross over in an orderly manner. One very large monkey appeared to be chief, and thinking it probable that he would be

the last to cross over, I went up to him and patted him on the head, but he did not take the slightest notice. Then, just as he was about to make a start, I caught hold of him by the tail, and followed.

Compared to the bridge of the *Penguin*, it was, of course, very unsteady. However, I managed to get across, narrowly escaping an accident, through a mischievous-looking monkey biting me on the foot. The first monkey to take hold now let go, and the line hung down as before, but from the tree on the opposite side. The one nearest the water climbed up the line to the branch; the others followed, and very soon the whole were across. I watched them till they were lost to view in the depths of the forest, then began the ascent of the range. This proved a very wearying task, for the range was steep, and I had to make many halts. Eventually, however, I succeeded in scaling one of the highest peaks. Here my feelings almost overcame me. There stretched far and wide in front an extensive, and, to all appearances, a populous country. There was no mistaking the fact now. Here was a new continent and a new civilization, the one all but unknown to the rest of humanity, the other independent in its origin. As far as the eye could reach, there stretched, in the direction of the Pole,

a long, winding, open sea, with numberless coves and headlands, and dotted here and there with the most beautiful islands I had ever beheld. The cities, towns and villages stood on the many-elevated promontories and peninsulas, while on either side were large tracts of undulating country, covered with plantations, green pastures, and orchards, and bordered on the east and west by the dim lines of lofty mountain ranges, the highest peaks of which were capped with snow. I could trace the courses of dark, winding lines running from the mountains to the sea, and indicating the channels of rivers and streams. On one of the headlands, a little to the right, and partly on the island opposite, stood what appeared to be the largest city; at least, its edifices were greater, and towers higher, than those of the other cities within view.

To it I bent my steps, and in due time found myself in the settled country I had seen from above. The magnificent harbour was filled with ships, some stationary, others travelling at a high rate of speed; yet no signs of steam were visible. I threaded my way through lanes of very large trees, of a kind I had never seen before. They were equal in size to, and slightly resembled, our pines, but were covered

with flowers, large and beautiful as our red roses. The houses (many of which appeared to be one mass of foliage and blossom), when I could get a glimpse of them, appeared to be much larger, and of a more permanent character, than those I had been accustomed to see even in Europe. There were many animals quietly grazing in open tracts and meadows. Some resembled the sheep, others the camel, and others the deer; but it was in vain I looked for any of those I had been accustomed to see in other parts of the world. I now came out on a wider avenue, and saw for the first time smoke issuing from several of the houses; for, notwithstanding the high civilization of this people, they still burned wood. Hitherto, I had seen none of the inhabitants, and this puzzled me; but I afterwards learned these were the hours set apart for rest.

My curiosity, however, was soon to be satisfied, for, on hearing a slight rumbling noise, I turned round, and saw a six-wheeled vehicle approaching, yet no horses or any other animals drawing it. A man sat in front, and at intervals turned a wheel by means of a small rod he held in his hand. What the motive power was I could not make out. It contained two men,—yes, men! mortals like myself,—and two women, and I felt

glad it was so. They were of the same colour as myself, and I could see at a glance that they belonged to the same race. What impressed me most, however, was their fine appearance. I heard them talk, and was taken aback, for they spoke a language I knew not. But what mortified me most of all were the ladies, who took a few significant glances at my apparel, and then seemed immensely amused, whereupon I turned my back towards them till they had passed. Up to the present I had always thought that my "claw-hammer" coat (though perhaps a little the worse for wear) and "pocket-felt" had a decidedly respectable appearance; but I now, however, began to be doubtful about the matter, and went on my way feeling very dejected. The men in the conveyance, however, were not dressed like myself, but wore embroidered cloaks on their shoulders, while the ladies wore neat, dark, plain, closely fitting dresses, not unlike those worn by many of our women.

I now began to approach the outskirts of the city, and saw many things that were new to me, The road I followed brought me to the principal street near the end farthest removed from the bay. It was wide, and ran in a straight line up a gentle incline in the direction of the water. The

buildings on either side were of the most beautiful, and appeared to me to be of the most costly, character. I kept on towards the harbour, and my spirits began to rise at the grandeur of the city before me. On one side of the street were lofty buildings, supported by pillars of polished stone resembling granite and agate; on the other, the buildings were equally impressive, but had not a business-like appearance, having neat flower gardens and shrubberies in front. (I afterwards found this to apply to all the streets in the city.) Indeed, as far as I could see, the one side consisted of an almost unbroken row of bright columns; the other of gardens, with flowers and creeping plants of every hue in bloom. These latter were attached to the back portions of buildings forming the business side of another street. I met many people, not hurrying and bustling on their way, but moving in an orderly and apparently leisurely manner.

Among them, indeed, were a few whose countenances were sad, but the vast majority seemed kind and cheerful, while that haggard and careworn look that clouded the brows of so many of the people in the cities of the other continents I had visited was wholly absent. I noticed that I was attracting attention. However, I kept on my course, looking

about me to the right and to the left at all that was to be seen.

The street was laid down with planks of what appeared to be very tough wood, placed closely together, and there was not a particle of dust.

There were numerous vehicles of nearly every size and shape, travelling at various rates of speed, but, like the first I had seen, were not drawn by animals. I did not go far, however, when one of the vehicles going in the same direction as myself, drew up close to me. It contained three men, one of whom pointed to a vacant seat. I thought of our own "slippery" cabbies, and for a moment had my misgivings, but a glance at the occupants soon convinced me of their genuineness, and I stepped in without any hesitation; besides, I was anxious to conceal as much of the "claw-hammer" as possible from the ladies. The man sitting foremost pulled a small handle, and off we went. My companions were extremely agreeable, and at first we tried to exchange ideas, but soon gave up the attempt as fruitless—at least, as far as words were concerned. After travelling some distance the vehicle stopped in front of a massive building, though only two storeys high, that commanded a magnificent view of the sea. It was certainly one

of the finest structures I had yet seen in the city. We alighted, and I followed my guides into a spacious apartment, where there was a young lady evidently in attendance. After exchanging a few words with her, they led into another room, where a sumptuous meal was laid on a very large table. This pleased me not a little, for I was hungry, not having tasted food for some time. We sat down, and though the victuals were new to me, I did ample justice to the repast. There were many vacant seats, and other guests arrived at intervals, till nearly the whole were occupied.

On the way out I met the young lady again, and, taking a sovereign from my pocket, placed it on the table. She took it up, examined it closely, looked smilingly towards me, and returned it. One of my new friends who saw this appeared interested, so I showed him some more coins, bank notes, and a blank P.N. It now began to dawn upon me that I had not the proper currency for this country. Nor was I wrong, for my friend showed me some of his coins. They were of different sizes, but all of the one metal, which was of a dark colour, very hard and heavy. On returning them to him, he put them, with a number of others, into a small bag, which he presented to me. I then wished him

to accept some of my sovereigns, but could only induce him to take one, and I could see that he did this only by way of courtesy. The young lady also declined to take one of my new coins; so I consigned the bag to my pocket, reflecting that they might be useful in purchasing a suit of clothes similar to those worn by my companions. We now went up a staircase to a large and magnificently furnished room. My friend who presented me with the bag, then showed me a very comfortable-looking bedroom close by, which he gave me to understand would be mine.

My ambition now was to acquire a knowledge of the language, and I felt sure my new friend would be willing to teach me; so I held up a few articles, which he named, then, pointing to himself, he uttered the word "Folbrizzio," which I understood to be his name. I immediately patted my chest, and exclaimed, "Captain Periwinkle." So we were now introduced, and on the best of terms. We repaired to the balcony, and I sat down to contemplate the beauty of the scene before me—the bay with its many islands—when some dark objects moving in the air above the distant horizon attracted my attention. They were evidently coming towards us. Nearer and nearer they came. What

could they be? The only conclusion I could come to was that they must be huge birds. I thought of our emus and cassowaries, but they were insignificant compared to these, and reflected what enormous birds must inhabit this region. I pointed them out to my friends, but they appeared little interested, and did not attempt to offer any explanation, doubtless knowing that my curiosity would soon be satisfied. There were three in all, and the first, which was a considerable distance ahead, had more the appearance of a fish than a bird. Yes, a fish! And a sword-fish, too, for there was no mistaking the long spike that extended from his snout, and I fancied also that I could see the fins and tail moving rapidly. The second, however, must be a bird, for I could see the huge wings flapping in a majestic manner. As for the third, I could as yet make nothing of it, for it appeared to be divided into two parts. The first, however, made me feel very uncomfortable, for he was coming straight towards myself, his sword pointing to my chest. What was to be done? I looked about for a harpoon, but of course there was none, and indeed no other weapon that I could defend myself with. I felt savage, and would have liked to have killed him, for I did not wish to beat

a retreat. Another moment, however, and I would be pinned against the wall; so I instantly left my seat and slipped inside the door, putting the stout wall between us. I now felt a great relief, and waited for the crash, speculating at the same time how far his sword would penetrate the building.

To my surprise, however, I heard him fall, and very lightly, too, on the balcony. I was out in an instant, and standing before me was neither shark nor sword-fish, but a hale, hearty man, in the act of taking off his head-gear. The huge bird soon lit beside him. After a flutter or two the enormous wings dropped, and, indeed, the bird itself appeared to be falling to pieces, when a man stepped out of the wreck. The third dark object was now sailing towards us. It was very much like a balloon, and I could see two persons seated in the car beneath. They did not, however, come to the balcony, but dropped in an open space in the garden below. The pair turned out to be a young man and a very handsome young lady, and I confess I felt somewhat interested in them, having been informed they were lovers. However, I soon lost sight of them, for they passed into the house. I now learnt from my friends that the new arrivals were from other cities of Neuroomia, which they gave me to

understand was the name of their continent. They further explained that this was a very quick and easy method of travelling, and pointed out that the gear of the first was made sharp at the end so as to offer the least possible resistance to the atmosphere.

The new-comers were known to my friends, to whom they gave some letters and papers. Folbrizzio mentioned their names to me, and told them how I came to Neuroomia. They remained with us for some time, probably a period equal to a few of our days, and then departed in the manner they came. I watched them till they were out of sight, then turned into my room, reflecting that I had indeed dropped into a land of wonders.

CHAPTER III.

ITS HIGH CIVILIZATION AND PEOPLE.

On the advice of Folbrizzio and others I began to study the language, and went out but little. I had many tutors, and made what I considered to be satisfactory progress. The "Llilimalia," as the house was called, was slightly after the pattern of one of our first-class hotels. From the first I was impressed with the orderly and cultivated manners of the visitors, who were constantly coming and going, so that I was always well off for company.

On one occasion a more than ordinarily interesting man, named Banyaba, called at the "Llilimalia." There was something impressive in his manner, and I had a long conversation with him. On learning my history, he suggested that we should go for a walk together to some picturesque places outside the city. I accompanied him, and on the way he offered to give me any information I desired about their people and institutions. This

led me to think of politics, so I made inquiries concerning their form of government.

"Our Government, Captain Periwinkle," he said, "is Republican. The chief ruler, or Yuengai, is elected by the whole of the people, and resides in Atazatlan, which is the political capital of Neuroomia. You may have noticed his house on a hill to your right as you were approaching the city." I had. "There are," he continued, "many other large cities in Neuroomia, and one of them even much larger than Atazatlan; but you shall doubtless see them all. I should have told you, however," he went on, "that notwithstanding the great powers conferred upon the Yuengai, or President, the office in reality is more of a social than a political character, for he seldom has to interfere with the course of justice or the administration of a province. Each territory has its own governor and legislature, yet he is looked up to by all as the head, and his decision in many matters, though not in all, is final. He is elected for a period of ten years, and as a general rule it is not desirable that he should be under one hundred years of age."

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed. "To what age do your people live?"

"According to our statistics," he answered, "the

average life in Neuroomia is from one hundred and fifty to two hundred years; but in some parts—Atazatlan, for instance—it is greater, probably not less than two hundred years."

"And in the face of this," I said, "you claim to have come originally from the same stock as the nations of the other continents?"

"Yes!" was the reply; "but you must remember that this continent has been separated from the other parts of the world for at least three hundred millions of years, and had your people a like climate, and lived under similar conditions to us for the period mentioned, I venture to hazard a belief that their average life would be fully as long as that of ours. With us also," he continued, "the average life is on the increase, though the difference, say, in twenty generations, is very slight. However, you may examine the statistics for yourself as soon as you become better acquainted with our language. They are thoroughly reliable for the last million years."

"Have you any wars?" I inquired.

"None on record," was the answer. "You see, we all speak the one tongue, and we take no delight in injuring our fellow-men. Look at our herds of olgommeras!" he went on. "They sometimes

butt, and even fight each other; probably the idea of killing one another never occurred to them. How much less, then, should be the prospect of it occurring to man?"

"Have you neither disputes nor quarrels among your people?" I asked.

"We have disputes about ownership occasionally," was the reply, "for we have private property in everything except land, which belongs to the general Government. These disagreements, however, are generally settled by arbitration, and it is only in very rare instances indeed that they have to be referred to our high tribunal. The hour at which we dine, however, is drawing near, so you had better come with me, and stay for a time, at least, at my house. We shall endeavour to make you comfortable."

I accepted his invitation, and on our way through the town we met many beautiful girls, walking in groups of two, sometimes more, and I noticed that many of them were known to my friend. This led me to inquire at what age they generally married.

"The girls generally marry from twenty to seventy," was the response; "the men from thirty to one hundred. I am one hundred and fifty years of age myself," he continued, "and have never

married; but then I am considered to be an old bachelor by the ladies of Atazatlan. However, I have recently decided to choose a partner."

The piece of intelligence concerning his age fairly astonished me, for I had previously considered him to be about fifty,—the same age as myself.

We at length stopped in front of a large, two-storey building, which, by the way, was high enough for a three storey, then passed through a well-kept flower-garden to the door, which was open. My friend now led the way through a large hall, then through another doorway, and I found myself in a splendidly furnished apartment, and in the presence of two young ladies, who smiled kindly as we entered. These, Banyaba informed me, were his sisters, and he mentioned my name to them. Then in a few words he explained how I came to be in Atazatlan. They appeared much interested, and said they would endeavour to make me happy. (I felt flattered at this.) However, there was no grasping of hands. Very soon after my arrival the meal was announced "ready," and we sat down to it. There were many things on the table; some I had tried before at the "Llilimalia," but others were new to me. However, not a great distance away was a vessel containing fish. This put me in mind of scha-

nepper, so I made a beginning with it. It was not schanepper, however, but quite equal in flavour to that coveted fish. I enjoyed the meal, and we discussed many matters, the sisters being highly interested when I was telling them about our society ladies and leaders of fashion, Estas remarking that she knew nothing of the fashions, and that in Atazatlan the dresses of the ladies had changed but little for a very long period, and that in dressing they studied health and comfort rather than outward display. However, everything I beheld in Neuroomia since my arrival appeared so superior to what I had been accustomed to see in other parts of the world, that I could not help feeling somewhat insignificant, and further, I thought it quite possible I might not be doing justice to my own country and people. The ladies having retired, I informed him that if he chose I would tell him about some of our clever men and great philanthropists, also that I would address him standing, as I could speak better in that position than sitting.

"I shall be very much delighted to hear you speak, Captain Periwinkle," he said.

Having stood up and cleared my throat, I began, and, in what I considered to be a neat little three-and-a-half hours' speech, told him about some of

the most distinguished men in Australia, Europe, and America, and also dwelt upon the noble efforts of many of my countrymen to alleviate distress, and improve institutions and systems. He listened attentively throughout the whole, and when I had resumed my seat, remarked,—

"I have not the least doubt but you have a very large number of able and philanthropic men among you. Indeed, I had already arrived at that conclusion before you began speaking, from what you had previously said in a casual manner. However, from what little I understand of your affairs, I am inclined to believe that it is not systems so much as individuals that require reforming. Of course, at the same time, it is obvious that bad systems will corrupt individuals, but it by no means follows that good systems will produce just individuals. Something more is required. And, again, it is a much easier matter to sketch out and organize systems than to improve individuals. Further, I am of the opinion that the great error your reformers and statesmen make, is in endeavouring to make a beginning at the top rather than at the bottom of the scale, where they should endeavour to end rather than begin."

I now, however, began to feel dozy,—I always do

when discussing politics,—so I inquired if it was the custom with them to set certain hours apart for sleep. While at the "Llilimalia," I slept whenever I felt inclined.

"Yes," he answered; "we have certain specified hours for repose, but in very many cases they are not passed in slumber. However, the general rule is, we sleep on inclination, and as little as we can. With you, I understand, about one-third of your lives is passed in sleep. With us the time passed in that condition is rather less than one-eighth. We consider any more sleeping than is really required to refresh the system a waste of time, and work constitutes one of our chief pleasures."

"How about the night?" I demanded.

"Well, you have not been a night with us yet," was the response. "When you have, you will probably find it not so dark and dreary as you imagine. We work in the fields at night without any artificial light, the same as in the day. However, I have an engagement shortly, and shall leave you for the present. My sisters will be able to give you information concerning our pastimes and domestic life."

Banyaba here took his leave. However, I felt quite at home with the ladies. They were ex-

tremely agreeable, and made inquiries about the parts of the world I had visited, and the people therein. So I spoke of London, Paris, New York, and the Melbourne Cup. Estas, my favourite, informed me that she was fifty years of age, and her sister twenty-five. I was much surprised to learn the difference in their ages, for, judging from their appearance, I thought there could not be more than a couple of years between them.

We were now by ourselves, as Arizenda, the younger one, withdrew. Estas now suggested that we should go into the garden. I of course acquiesced, and we walked through the beautiful lawns and flower plots that surrounded the house, Estas in the meantime giving me to understand that they were kept in order by her sister and herself. She also initiated me in the names and peculiarities of many of the strange trees, plants, and flowers. The slanting rays of the sun, which was getting no lower, but travelling slowly along the horizon, shone through the foliage and flowers, while birds and butterflies of gaudy colours flew among the trees, or rested on the blossoms. Everything, indeed, was so quiet and peaceful, that I felt extremely happy. I knew that I loved Estas, and believed that she returned my passion. We

had been seriously discussing some matter, when she bent down to examine the buds of some rare flower about to open. I took advantage of this to place my arm softly round her waist with a view to draw her towards me, but before I had time to utter a word, she pounced on me like a wild beast, bruising my muscles with her iron grip, then tossed me high into the air as if I were a mere play-toy. I fell heavily on my back, but was up again in a moment, and mad with rage to think that I, Captain Periwinkle, of the whaling ship *Penguin*, should be submitted to such infernal treatment. On gaining my feet, I looked towards her, and uttered some choice phrases I learnt before I became captain.

However, I do not think she understood them. I looked round for the gate, but could not see one, so I walked briskly towards the house, followed by Estas, who said there must be a misunderstanding somewhere. I explained that I only wished to take her nearer myself, which with us indicated love and esteem. She replied that she had not been accustomed to such sudden outbursts of affection, and feared that manner of wooing would not be approved of by the young ladies of Atazatlan, who would probably repel it as unceremoniously as she did herself. Nevertheless, she implored me to

overlook her conduct, and regretted having caused me pain or annoyance. However, we let the matter drop, but I could not readily forget the juggling business, and began to think she could not have much poetry in her nature, and also that she was too old for me, now that I knew her age; but worst of all, I felt unwell, and knew that my liver was out of order, so I sought out my sleeping apartment, threw myself on the bed, and was soon fast asleep.

On waking, I found myself quite refreshed, and also quite cured of my love for Estas—that one toss in the air did it. My first impulse was to leave immediately, but on going out, I met Banyaba, who desired me to prolong my visit. I could see, by his surprise when I spoke of taking my departure, that he knew nothing of the little incident with his sister.

Estas and Arizenda now put in an appearance. They were as courtly as before, and I yielded to the request of the latter to remain longer, for, after all, the affair with the elder sister was the result of a misunderstanding, and on thinking the matter over, I came to the conclusion that it might be unkind of me to leave these well-meaning persons abruptly.

The ladies now withdrew, and Banyaba began to

tell me something about the recent engagement that caused his absence, in his usual cheerful manner, when Arizenda returned, bringing him a large and beautifully illustrated volume. This, he said, was the principal newspaper of Atazatlan, which they received at regular intervals.

On examining it, I found that it contained a vast amount of reading matter, but not so many advertisements as the *London Times* or the *Sydney Morning Herald.*

The next meal, however, was soon announced, and my host spoke of many matters, including some of his own adventures. Arizenda sat opposite me, and looked extremely well. She appeared prouder and more dignified than her sister. Like her, she was a blonde, with beautiful yellow hair and blue eyes. In figure, she was somewhat more graceful than the former, and was a little taller than myself, being about five feet ten inches in height. She also had a sympathetic voice, and I thought her possessed of more sentiment than her sister.

I now came to the conclusion that she and not Estas was the girl I should have loved, and began to wonder why I had bestowed my affections on the latter. However, it was evident now that I had made a mistake in doing so.

After a time, Banyaba took his departure for one of the distant cities of Neuroomia, and left me with the young ladies. Of course it was understood, as he would probably be absent for some time, and that I may be gone before his return. I enjoyed the company of Arizenda, and gave her an account of some of my travels. She laughed and sympathised in turn, and I felt myself fairly carried away by her charms.

"You must never think of leaving our continent, Captain Periwinkle," she said. "How foolish of you it would be to return, perhaps to greater dangers than those you have already experienced! Have you seen our beautiful harbour?" she continued.

I answered that I had only obtained a glimpse of it from a distance, and suggested that we should pay it a visit. She agreed, and we set out together. The harbour was indeed lovely, and more than realized my anticipations. We wandered by grottos and pebbly shores, meeting many people on our way, among whom it appeared Arizenda had numerous acquaintances. We had a long chat with a very beautiful brunette named Louva, who was a friend of 'Zenda's. She reminded me of her father's invitation to visit their home, and I again

promised to do so. We now turned homeward, and as we were passing a secluded and romantic water-fall, I determined to give my fair companion what I considered would be an agreeable surprise, by kissing her, and made the attempt by putting my arm around her neck (when she happened to be looking in the direction of the falls), and was in the act of putting my mouth against hers, when she suddenly seized me and bumped me a few times against one of the trees close by, exclaiming, "Would you bite me, you wretch!" then carried me to the water-fall, and placed me beneath it till I was thoroughly saturated, after which she tossed me on the grass and walked indignantly away. I got up, shivering with the cold, feeling despondent and very much humiliated at the indignity to which I had been submitted. One thing, however, I felt thoroughly convinced of—that my love for 'Zenda was gone; that waterfall banished it.

While meditating what I should do, a passer-by noticed the predicament I was in, and, doubtless, coming to the conclusion that I had fallen into the pool below the cataract, invited me to his house. I accompanied him, and on the way learnt that he was a bachelor. I then related all that occurred at the waterfall, and he sympathised with me. It was

not, however, to gain sympathy,—which I scorned, —that I gave him a detailed account of the incident, but from a sense of what is right. Had I remained silent, I should have been concealing the truth, which I consider equivalent to telling a lie, and I hate men who tell lies. One of the causes that induced me to become so much attached to Septimus Robinson was, that he never told lies. However, when I come to think the matter over, I remember that he seldom told anything. So the only conclusion I can arrive at is that on many occasions he must have concealed the truth, and was therefore a silent liar all his life. I saw no ladies about the residence of my new acquaintance, nor was I anxious to see any. I put on a suit of his clothes, but it was not a good fit, being rather large, so he suggested I should go to a tailor with him. The tailor soon had me in a splendid suit, the fit being all that could be desired. I now felt myself a masher, and quite recovered from the effects of my walk with Arizenda. We returned to my friend's house and dined together; then, thinking of my promise to visit Louva, my host directed me, and I repaired thither.

After a brisk walk, I came to a large building that answered the description I had of Louva's

dwelling. I entered the gateway and met Ilaclatella (her father) at the door. He gave me a hearty reception, and in due time I found myself alone with Louva in a gorgeously decorated room. She took her seat in front of a large stringed instrument that reminded me of a piano, played sweetly, and sang like the birds of Neuroomia. She had thick, wavy, black hair, and large hazel laughing eyes. However, her principal charm was her complexion, and I thought her the handsomest girl I had yet seen in Atazatlan. She made inquiries about the *Penguin* and the frozen lands beyond Neuroomia; also about the great oceans I had traversed, and appeared pleased when I told her that at present I had no intention of returning to the regions from whence I came. Indeed, I fancied that she began to look upon me as a hero, and felt there was a kind of mute sympathy between us which instilled confidence, and made her company agreeable and entertaining in the highest degree.

The hour for dining having arrived, we joined the family circle. I felt in the highest spirits, and to impress Ilaclatella with the grandeur of the world I had left, for I never believed in acting the part of a cynic, I told him of the great fortunes of the Astors, Vanderbilts, Jay Gould, the Duke of West-

minster, Tyson, and others. When I had concluded, he simply inquired if there was any poverty in the countries where those men lived? I replied in the affirmative, and was compelled to admit that many persons every year died from starvation alone.

He then went on to say that he considered the amassing of enormous wealth by a few individuals a curse to any country.

Thereupon I inquired if there were no millionaires in Atazatlan.

His answer was "No. It would be almost impossible" (that is, if by millionaires I meant exceedingly wealthy persons). "I suppose you are aware," he continued, "that land with us is not private property. If, however, through trading or other means, a man should accumulate great wealth,—that is, what we should term great—the maximum fraction he can bequeath to any person at death, or give away during life, is defined by our laws. The State claims nearly the whole, so that with us no young person can begin life wealthy. With you, if I understand the matter correctly, Governments as a rule are poor, and individuals enormously wealthy. With us, the general Government is very wealthy, and every one has enough and to spare."

We now rose from the table, and very soon afterwards Ilaclatella went away to the city, leaving me again alone with Louva, who invited me to join a small fishing party she had arranged. I of course consented, for I knew that I should be quite at home at the fishing. The house was situated on a headland, with steps leading from the portico to the water's edge; so we got into the boat without any inconvenience. There were only two others going with us—a young lady and a man named Fontin, who appeared to be slightly older than myself. There were hooks, lines, and bait for the fish, and luncheon for ourselves in the boat.

The scenery was superb, and we pulled in the direction of a small island, where Louva said there were good fishing grounds. Getting the lines fitted up for Louva and myself was the work of a very brief time, for I was ambitious to catch the first fish, and I believe that Fontin also harboured that desire. We now let the boat drift, and threw our lines into the water nearly together. I, however, got the first bite, and after some little tugging, landed in the boat a fine plump fish, striped with red and gold. They called it a lomdin, and appeared to prize it much. It seems, however, that it possessed a certain peculiarity of which I

was ignorant. At any time it has the power to spring several feet into the air, yet seldom exhibits it if left unmolested. Unfortunately, however, almost immediately it was in the boat, and before any of the others could warn me, I ran my forefinger along one of the golden stripes. In an instant it curled itself almost round, then came slap up against my face, with such overwhelming force, that I lost my balance, and we both tumbled into the water, and nearly upset the boat. The lomdin, of course, disappeared, and I soon came to the surface again. The boat, however, was very light and somewhat frail, and I knew it would not be a very easy matter to climb into it; besides, I was anxious to let them see how I could swim, so I boldly struck out for the island. At first I swam leisurely, but all at once strained every muscle and sinew in my body to gain the land, for I saw a huge head, not unlike a seal's, come up out of the water, stare at me for a moment with its great eyes, then make for me at a rate of speed that was wonderful. I thought of our own sharks and crocodiles, and put forth all my strength, yet I was doubtful if I could reach the shore before he came up with me. A thousand things in that brief instant flashed across my brain. Yes! I was safe.

I felt the bottom, and was in shallow water. However, I hurried to the land, then turned round to have a look at my pursuer, but to my surprise he was swimming in another direction.

The boat was now coming up, so I knelt down to wash my face, for my nose bled profusely.

The others having landed, Louva, who was very kind and attentive, suggested that we return home. However, I would not agree to this. Of course I was wet, but that was nothing new to me. She mentioned the name of the monster that had disturbed me so much, and said that it was perfectly harmless, and subsisted upon roots and marine plants.

We now secured the boat, and threw in our lines from the shore, choosing places where we thought fish would probably be most plentiful, then made them fast, and ascended to the high ground, where we obtained a magnificent view of the surrounding sea. Louva and the other young lady in the meantime selected a picturesque spot under a broad-leaved tree for our luncheon. We sat down, and I believe all enjoyed the repast. Meanwhile, however, I kept well in the sun, and noticed with satisfaction that my clothes were drying. After our picnic was over, we rambled over the island, the ladies picking

the rare plants and flowers for their gardens and shrubberies.

After passing some time in this way, we returned to our lines, only to find, however, that they had not been disturbed by fish; still, the baits were gone, and this my friend said was the work of crustacea, so we decided to shift them and choose fresh places. Louva and myself threw ours in close to one another, but Fontin and the young lady went farther along the rocks, till we lost sight of them. The fish, however, did not seem inclined to bite, so we again made the lines fast, and went in search of shells.

The weather was sunny and beautiful, the birds sang in the trees above, and there was scarcely a ripple on the surface of the silent water. My clothes were now dry, and I began to enjoy the outing, for I loved Louva, and felt happy. Yes! happier, I thought, than I ever felt before; and I could not help reflecting how extremely pleasant an island like this would be for a home, and with loving Louva as a mate.

We now decided to climb one of the higher rocks, in order to get a better view of the shores. I was the first to reach the top, and judge my surprise on seeing Fontin in the very act of putting

his arm round the waist of the young lady, as they were sitting together on a cliff overlooking the water. I thought of what I had recently suffered for similar behaviour, and was almost speechless. Louva noticed my consternation, and hastened to my side. I pointed towards the guilty couple, but she only smiled, and said the only explanation that she could offer was that they had been acquainted for a very long time, and believed they were betrothed.

Here we decided to return to our lines and see about the fish; but there was none, the baits being untouched, so we came to the conclusion they were not going to bite, and made preparations for returning home. We did not have to wait long for Fontin and the young lady, who came leisurely along; but while they were still some distance away, a glance convinced us that as far as capturing fish was concerned, they had been as unsuccessful as ourselves.

The young ladies, who sang like sirens, pulled the boat, and at the same time entertained us with many beautiful songs on the way back, Fontin occasionally initiating me into the mysteries of fishing expeditions in Neuroomia.

On arriving at the steps, we saw Ilaclatella standing above. He called out to us that we need not

trouble about carrying the fish up, as he would send some one down for them; so we followed his advice.

Having reached the house, I did not join the others, but sought out my sleeping apartment, for I felt exhausted and inclined to slumber. Louva more than once appeared in my dreams. However, I slept long and soundly, and on waking up, felt very hungry. It so happened, however, that the dining hour was approaching, and by the time I was prepared, the meal was announced.

The conversation at the table on this occasion was brisk; in fact, I believe I opened the debate by adverting to the numerous inventions and discoveries of the nineteenth century. Whereupon Ilaclatella inquired if this were our first and only civilization, and if it were likely to be permanent.

I answered the first part of the question in the negative, but with regard to the latter I could say nothing, but believed it would be so.

He then inquired if by our inventions—which, he admitted, were indeed wonderful — we had eradicated all diseases from among our people, and improved the conditions of the masses generally?

Referring to diseases, I admitted we had not; and as for the masses, I could safely say that their

condition had certainly improved in many countries during recent years, but that much still remained to be done, and at the present time some of our ablest men were working in that direction. It now occurred to me that I had seen no delicate or unhealthy-looking persons in Atazatlan, nor did I hear of any strikes or inflammatory speeches. This led me to ask if they had no hospitals in the city.

"No!" was the reply; "we have no use for them. Diseases do still make their appearance in Neuroomia at long intervals, but we invariably manage to stamp them out in the bud. Our physicians are employed by the State, and each one has the supervision of a district, and reports to the central government of the State in which he is located the outbreak of any disease of an infectious or contagious character, and also furnishes periodical accounts of the general health of the people. It is also their duty to visit, give advice and medicine where required, and attend to the sick. Multifarious as these functions may at first appear, yet the work of our physicians is extremely light, but the responsibility is great, for we hold that nothing can be of greater import to a nation than the health of its people."

"Have you any idea how your civilization originated?" I inquired.

"It is believed that the ancient inhabitants of Neuroomia—that is, our forefathers—were savages," was the answer, "and also that our civilization originated through necessity or accident—perhaps both."

"It appears to be founded on a firm basis," I remarked.

"That," he said, "is the result of design, and I can give you information on that point. Our history tells us that the object of the ancient sages of the land was to secure perfect health for every individual, or, in other words, to have a people with healthy bodies and healthy minds. This they considered to be the first and most important step in the direction of a high civilization."

"And they were successful," I interjected.

"Yes," he said, "it appears they were, and that it was only the work of a few generations."

"How was this accomplished?" I asked.

"Many things had to be considered," was the answer. "In the first place," he continued, "they had to make themselves acquainted with Nature's laws, and then abide by them. Then again, their marriage laws were of a stringent character, and

of course food, clothing, dwellings, and exertion had to receive attention."

"I notice," I said, "that though your people are not much greater in size than ours, yet they are ever so much stronger" (I had unpleasant proof of it), "and possess more vitality. How is this sustained," I asked, "considering that you are one people?"

"We are but one people, and have only one continent," was the reply; "yet we are constantly colonizing. Take, for instance, that rich district you passed through on your way to Atazatlan. Well, the whole of the people are to be removed from that territory at an early date, and settled on another that has not been occupied for nearly five hundred years. Our people like this migration to new parts; they and also the animals and plants benefit by it."

"How about the health of your great cities?" I asked.

"Cities are built only in localities known to be extremely healthy," was the answer, "and on chosen sites. The principal portion of Atazatlan, for instance, is built on the bare rock, the soil used for gardening and other purposes having been carried to it; and then it is not an unusual thing

for us to shift the whole population of a city to a fresh site. However," he continued, "I shall be leaving here in a little time for Tehana, which is the largest city in Neuroomia, and if you choose, I shall be happy to take you with me: you will learn more by sight than by explanation. There are also other large cities, such as Scalascala and Yacla, that you may find interesting to visit.

CHAPTER IV.

A GREAT POLAR CITY.

At the appointed time, Ilaclatella and myself walked down to one of the many jetties. On arriving there, he remarked that we were too early, as there was no boat alongside. I had now an opportunity of seeing the shipping of Atazatlan. The harbour was literally crowded with craft of all sizes, from the miniature boat to the huge vessel; but what I wondered at most was the variety of shape and difference of speed they exhibited. Some were of very elegant build, but others again were almost round, and clumsy; as regards speed, there were many that shot through the waters, while others went so slowly that they scarcely appeared to move. Seeing no sign of steam, I inquired of Ilaclatella the nature of the motive power that sent them along. He replied that some were propelled by air, others by electricity, others by water, and a few by steam, while nearly the whole, I noticed,

were supplied with more or less sails, in order to take advantage of the wind, when there happened to be any. On looking to the opposite shore, I actually saw what appeared to be a small flat headland, with a number of houses and crowds of people, break off and put to sea. I was now, however, getting accustomed to wonders; so I watched it till it got some distance away from the shore.

Ilaclatella, now, seeing that I was interested, said it was one of their floating villages, and was used for excursion purposes, and removing people, animals, and merchandise. I viewed it through my glass (one of the powerful glasses of Atazatlan), and could see that it was constructed on the raft principle, and that the decks were only a few feet above the surface of the water.

I here remarked to my friend "that on this account it must be useless in stormy weather."

"We have no storms in Neuroomia," was the reply. "They expend their fury on the icefields and oceans beyond, but do not reach us here. We sometimes experience pretty sharp winds," he went on, "but not of sufficient violence to ruffle the sea to any great extent."

The launch now having come alongside the jetty, we stepped on board, and in a few minutes more

were flying through the waters of the stormless Noccalattan Sea in the direction of the Pole.

This sea, Ilaclatella informed me, was land-locked, of considerable length, and connected only by a narrow channel with the great expanse of open water in the vicinity of the icefields. Atazatlan was, he said, near the extreme end, and along its shores were the largest cities of Neuroomia.

On we sped, past harbours and cities; for the *Dadoti*, as the boat was called, ran direct from Atazatlan to Tehana. The air was clear, cold, and invigorating, and I was in the highest spirits; indeed, I felt twenty years younger than when I first came to Atazatlan, and at intervals viewed with innate pleasure the change for the better that was taking place in my countenance and figure. I was evidently getting younger in years and ideas, and my hopes were never brighter. The iron-grey hairs were fast disappearing from my head and beard, which were gradually resuming their youthful glossiness and former dark colour. Several of my acquaintances, including Louva herself, mentioned the change; and Ilaclatella said that before very long I would not look like I did, but in all likelihood like a Neuroomian at fifty.

I have thought it just possible that, as I shall

reluctantly have to refer to myself frequently in this and subsequent chapters (narrative is the word used in the original MS.), some d——d sneaking, prejudiced and envious people of the Robinson type might be inclined to accuse me of egotism, *i.e.*, it this diary should ever be found. All I have to say in defence against their malice is, that I am endeavouring to follow the noble example set by the gifted and honourable people of this continent, by speaking of things just as I found them, and relating events and incidents exactly as they occurred.

We now saw a great city in the distance, which I learned from my friend was Tehana, our destination. It appeared to consist of domes and palaces, but what rivetted my attention most was what appeared to be a cloud of ever-changing rainbows above the centre of the city. I thought it the most beautiful phenomenon I had ever beheld, and felt intensely interested; indeed, for a time I saw nothing else. I looked towards Ilaclatella, but he offered no explanation; so I tried to solve the mystery myself, and examined it through my glass, but all I could see was the ever-varying lovely colours intermingled with water and spray. I had noticed this patch of red, purple and crimson long

before the city itself, but then it was too indistinct to make anything out of it.

Ilaclatella now came up by my side, and said,—

"I see that you are puzzled by the mass of colours overhanging the city."

I answered in the affirmative, and looked eagerly towards him for an explanation.

"That," he said, "is the Great Fountain of Tehana, one of the wonders of Neuroomia. It marks the place of the Pole, the southern extremity of the world, and the culminating point of our planet."

I did not utter a word, but felt much the same as when I first saw Atazatlan. I thought for a moment of the tragic end of so many of our own great navigators in endeavouring to reach the opposite point—their ardour, hopes, fears, and despair.

My friend, upon seeing that I was distressed, inquired what was the matter. I then referred to the fate of some of the brave men we had sent to the North. He here said that I would probably be requested, if willing, to give detailed accounts concerning this and other matters connected with the great world I had left, during my stay in the city. He also informed me for the first time of the reception I was about to receive from the people of Tehana. It was now well known throughout Neu-

roomia, he said, that I was from what to them was another world; and it was also believed that I would be able to set at rest the differences of opinion that had arisen from the scanty information they possessed of the regions beyond the icefields. He continued that I was to be guest of the Governor, who was aware of the hour that the boat would arrive.

The *Dadoti* at this time was gliding up at less than half speed to a wharf crowded with people. On landing, they made room for us, and Ilaclatella presented me to Yeyema, Governor of Tehana and the State of Zenoria. He welcomed me, on behalf of the people, to Tehana, treating me at the same time with great courtesy and respect. I could see that my friend was well known to a large number of those present, and that he and the Governor were on intimate terms. I was now introduced to many others, and after some little conversation, Yeyema suggested that we should make a start for his residence; so we walked a short distance to where a large and luxurious-looking vehicle was standing: it had six wheels on either side, and one in front. Several persons, probably between twenty and thirty, got into it, then the man in front pushed his handle, and it moved off at a good round pace.

Some one here suggested that "we proceed slowly," in order that I might get a better view of the city, whereupon the speed was slackened, and, at my own request, we drove in the direction of the Great Fountain.

The city itself was circular in form, and very different from Atazatlan; it was even more beautiful than the latter, and I thought the design better. The buildings, however, were of the same substantial character, constructed of polished stone of different colours, the front in all cases having porticos supported by pillars of different stone, and a profusion of ornamental work at the top. They seldom exceeded three storeys in height, and were of circular, oval, or oblong shape. I understood also that the interior agreed with the exterior in form, and was informed that there was not an angle to be found in the city. The circular streets were crossed by others which ran from the outskirts towards the centre, terminating near one another in the large round open space that surrounded the fountain, from which the ground rose very gradually, so that the outer edifices were not eclipsed by those nearer the centre.

After driving some distance, and round one of the circular streets, we entered the park-like space,

in the middle of which was the Great Fountain, or rather fountains, for I now discovered there were many. Here a panorama burst upon my view that neither time, events, nor sojourn elsewhere is ever likely to efface from my memory. Here indeed was the Pole itself,—not a frozen waste, nor a frozen sea, but a great fountain, more beautiful than it would be possible for my imagination to contemplate—the centre of a great and populous city, itself the largest in a benignant continent, inhabited by a just, loving, and generous people. Yes, indeed, the South Pole itself! and I, Captain Periwinkle, of the whaling ship *Penguin*, was destined to be the first human being from our own great world to see it.

We now stepped from the vehicle, and I gazed long in amazement at the scene before me. The Great Fountain in the centre rose to the height of about five hundred feet, and sent its waters, which descended in the form of a circular cataract, fully two hundred feet higher. Just above the first falls, and resting on the central portion of the column which projected, was an enormous globe, from the top of which ascended another and smaller column, that sent up several streams of water from its basin-like top, one going from the centre to a great

height above all the others. These streams partially encircled the globe and fell into the basin above the first cataract, the whole, notwithstanding the great volume of water, descending to the lake beneath in the form of spray. The globe represented our earth, and I fancied that I could see between the streams of falling water the outlines of the continents and oceans, with some of the larger islands, traced upon it by means of prominences and depressions.

This great fountain was surrounded by smaller ones (yet themselves of great height), supporting other globes representing the moon and larger planets. The whole of the fountains were made of gold, hardened by some other non-corrosive metal, and the beautiful lake beneath was inhabited by many kinds of aquatic birds that were new to me. It was dotted here and there with small islets, and fishes of various forms and gaudy colours might be seen swimming about in the clear water. The ornamental fence that enclosed the lake was of solid gold, as was also the outer fence enclosing the open space that surrounded it. This ground was laid out with flowers, shrubs, and small trees, and divided into numerous plots by winding avenues. The rainbows were caused by the sun

shining on the spray, and the streams were so arranged that the colours kept changing as the sun changed his position in the heavens.

I now understood why Tehana was circular, and appreciated the culture of the people, who considered that, owing to its singular position, it should be emblematical of the form of our world.

After remaining for some time in this beautiful place, we returned to the vehicle, and made a fresh start for the Governor's residence.

As in Atazatlan, only one side of the street—the outer one—was used for business purposes, the porticos of the houses on the opposite side having the appearance of conservatories of flowering plants and creepers.

I made inquiries concerning the Great Fountain, and was told by Yeyema that it had been built many centuries, and that the water which supplied it came from a lake high up in the neighbouring mountains.

He also remarked that so complete were the designs of the channel of communication, and so perfect the materials used in its construction, that for generations it had not been found necessary to effect repairs or interfere with it in any way.

For the first time in Neuroomia I now saw boys

and girls, and in a few cases men and women, riding on graceful-looking animals resembling the deer. Judging from their build, I came to the conclusion that they must be very swift, and they did not appear to have a particle of vice in their nature. The vehicle pulled up in front of one of the mansions we passed, and which I understood to be the residence of a legislator. Yeyema stepped out, and informed me that he had business here, which would probably detain him for some little time, and that I could accompany him if I chose.

However, I preferred waiting, everything being so glorious outside. I came down and walked a little distance along the porticos (the others remaining in the vehicle), when I met a very attractable looking young lady, accompanied by a lad, probably her brother, riding in the opposite direction. They stopped, however, and dismounted only a few doors from where I was standing, and, letting the animals go, were about to enter one of the buildings. I felt curious, and thought I would like to have a ride on one of these new "mokes." So I stepped up to the boy, and inquired if I could have a "spin" on the animal close by. He readily consented, stating the time when he would again require the beast. I mounted with little difficulty,

and started him off along the street. He was not getting over the ground, however, as rapidly as I desired, so I jerked his head in order to make him go faster—a performance, it was plain, he did not relish. Still, it had the effect I had anticipated, for he went along much more quickly, but at the same time at a peculiar dancing pace that jerked me terribly; so I had another pull at his head. This time, however, he made a bound to the one side that almost shook the liver out of me. I now got impatient, and kicked him on the ribs with my heels, wondering if he were used to spurs. He now went along with lightning speed for a little distance, then stopped all at once. I was, however, prepared for this manœuvre on his part, and did not go over his head. He appeared somewhat disappointed at this, for he made a strange snorting noise, and went very quickly backward by a series of leaps, which I knew would impair my digestion.

However, I did not loose my balance, and felt all the more confident that I could master him, so I gave his head a few more jerks and his ribs a few more kicks, in order to persuade him into submission; but he did not appear to be inclined that way, for he sprang first forward, then sideways, and went along at a hopping pace that punished me

severely. I endeavoured to pull him up, but he appeared to have already changed his tactics, and suddenly went down on his knees. I knew that my only safety was in sitting well back, so I sat back till my head touched his rump, keeping at the same time my legs well up, in case he might throw himself over on his side; but this appears not to have been his game, for, almost immediately his knees touched the ground, he sprang back clean from under me, and at the same time gave me a dig in the back with his horns, which afterwards caused me considerable pain and inconvenience.

When I recovered consciousness, I found myself lying in a bed on a large and well-ventilated room. The fresh air streamed in through the open windows, and I felt as if it were giving me new life. But where was I? The room and surroundings were strange to me.

I thought of the *Penguin*, Louva and Atazatlan. Then there was a young lady in the room; but not Louva, for she was a blonde, her beautiful golden hair waving in tresses over her shoulders. I looked into the kind and handsome face, and knew that I could not have seen it before. I was about to attempt to speak, when she came near, and said, in a sweet voice, "You are still very weak, Captain

Periwinkle, and should try to remain quiet a little longer. I am glad to think you are out of danger."

Immediately I heard my own name, everything crowded back to my memory in an instant, and with a sudden effort I raised my head. However, I felt weak, and had to let it fall again on the pillow, feeling at the same time a sharp, shooting pain in my back. I now felt very thirsty, and asked for a drink of water, and in doing so felt it a difficult matter to speak. She filled a small vessel from a jug on the table, and handed it to me. On tasting it, I found it was not water, for which I longed. However, it allayed my thirst, and I felt better.

I hereupon inquired where I was? She answered that this was Yeyema the Governor's house, and in reply to further inquiries said that I had been ill for a long time, and suffered from fever. However, that I had better try to sleep, and that she would leave me in the meantime, as she was anxious to be the first to convey the welcome tidings of my recovery to her father, the Governor. Saying this, she smiled and withdrew. I felt interested in her, but again feeling exhausted, I turned over on my side, and fell asleep. I slept

long and soundly, and on waking, felt stronger. The young lady was sitting in the room, reading. However, when she saw that I was awake, she put down her book and inquired if I felt better. I answered in the affirmative. She then mixed up a drink, which I swallowed at one draught.

She now left the room, and returned almost immediately with some fruit and light food, whereupon I managed to sit up. However, I noticed that my hands and arms were considerably changed, and wondered what my face would be like. So I inquired for a looking-glass. This she brought, though somewhat reluctantly. It was fixed on a stand, and she assisted me to hold it in front of my face. Yes, indeed, it was myself, but only a shadow of the former Periwinkle. But my beard! Where was my beard? I must have been shaved. Passing my hand over my chin and upper lip in search of the stubble was the work of a moment. But, alas! there was none. My beard, that Louva prized so much, was gone. Then a horrible thought struck me. I saw no hairs projecting from beneath the bandage that covered my head, so I made an attempt to tear it off, but was prohibited by the young lady, who reminded me that serious consequences might follow my rash-

ness, as the wound on the back of my head was not yet quite healed. I then dived my hand in beneath the bandage in front. My worst fears were realized, and I sank back on the pillow. From the first I found it a most difficult matter to speak even a few words. I now felt inclined to speak again, and thought there must be something wrong with my mouth; so I felt the gums with my tongue, but they were quite smooth. I then tried them with my finger, but there was not a tooth left.

I thought for a moment, then moved my feet, to make sure they too were not gone.

The image of the beast that gave me the fall now presented itself to my mind, and I was up again at once, and mad with rage. How I longed for my six-shooter, to put a bullet through him! Oh! if I could only find him!

A man now (a stranger to me) appeared at the door with a bottle in his hand; he advanced towards the table without uttering a word, poured a small quantity of the contents of his bottle in a vessel resembling a spoon. This he held right up against my mouth, and then looked at me in what I thought a very determined manner. I scarcely knew what to do. However, I opened my mouth mechanically, and down it went. I got relief

afterwards, and remember feeling very sleepy. When I woke up again, I felt refreshed, and looked about for the young lady; but she was gone, so I began to consider, and confess that I felt influenced by a spirit of devilment at my own ludicrous position. Here was I, toothless, beardless, hairless, and dangerously wounded, with a fever thrown in by way of an additional luxury. I fancied there was something comical about the situation, and felt so amused that I had a quiet chuckle to myself over the matter.

After a time the door opened, and the young lady entered the room, looking, I thought, more lovely than ever. She approached my bedside, and said that I should endeavour to be cheerful, for Dr. Exelexeto was of the opinion that, notwithstanding my weakness, I should speedily recover, but that it would be necessary for me to remain quiet and avoid excitement of every kind till I got stronger.

I then began to thank her for her kindness to me during my illness. She replied that she was amply rewarded for any little trouble that she might have taken, by seeing me make such progress towards convalescence. I learnt that her name was Vandalia, and tried to keep up a conversation with her in a stammering way. She told me that I was

brought to the house stunned and senseless, and after a little time that a fever had set in, which took such a thorough hold of my system, that Dr. Exelexeto (the man who gave me the medicine) was for a time afraid that it would baffle his skill. During this time she said that I raved frequently. I asked her if I mentioned any names.

She said "Yes! that she thought I mentioned several, but could at present only remember the words, 'Sydney,' 'Theatre Royal.'"

I then inquired if any one had called to see me during my illness.

She answered in the affirmative, and said that a young lady, named Louva, flew across the sea from Atazatlan, and remained for some time.

"During which period of my illness was this?" I asked.

"Just after I had lost my hair and beard," was the response.

"Horrible!" I thought, and was beginning to feel uneasy, when the doctor himself entered the room, and the young lady withdrew. He appeared to be a genial, jovial, good-natured sort of fellow, and, after giving me a dose of his medicine, said he had several flanillas, if at any time I should feel inclined for another ride.

I cursed the flanillas in nautical language, and made inquiries about my wounds.

He said I had one on the back of my head, caused by the fall, and another in my back, made by the animal's horns; but that they would soon be healed. He then inquired how I came to grief, and I gave him an account of my first ride in Neuroomia.

He said that I had acted altogether wrong. If I wanted the animal to go faster, I should have pinched his left ear; if slowly, I should have scratched his near flank; and if I wished to bring him to a halt at once, all I had to do was to squeeze the back of his neck with my finger and thumb; but they were, he continued, generally broken in and used by boys, who had various ways of making themselves understood to them. However, he had certainly never heard of the treatment I had adopted, and said that flanillas were not vicious, and that I must have frightened the animal out of his reckoning by my capers; whereupon I told him that with us horses were beaten and spurred. He then asked if the horse by nature was a very fierce animal. I replied in the negative. He said he did not know enough about horses to pass an opinion concerning the wisdom

of striking them with sticks, but that to him the practice of sticking spikes of metal into the flesh of dumb animals, that were willing and could be trained to do their utmost for man, appeared, to say the least of it, senseless and cruel.

"However," he went on, "I suppose that you are getting tired, so I shall leave you to Vandalia. Charming young lady that, eh! Just the kind of girl I should like to nurse me if I were sick. Pity your friend from Atazatlan was allowed to see you! I was away at the time, otherwise she would have been spared the trial of seeing you at a disadvantage; however, she will be glad to hear of your prospects of recovery. Ah! your food; what about your food? Why, you have not yet tasted the last that was sent in! You have no teeth! Well, in the meantime you must do the best you can without them, and live somehow. Terrible fever, that, to have left you so bare! Never knew any one to have it so bad before; something peculiar in the system. Might benefit by it in the end. What did you say? Is it common in Neuroomia? No! Almost unknown here. Now for your medicine. Here! swallow this. That's right,—head a little this way. Be still. Don't disturb yourself. Will look in again." And the doctor was gone.

During the whole time he was with me he kept up a conversation by a series of disjointed phrases and broken sentences, and I subsequently learned that this was his only mode of speech.

Vandalia now entered the room with some food, of which I partook. She said that she was glad to learn from the doctor that I was mending, and hoped I would soon be able to rise. Saying this, she retired, and in a little time returned with a collection of various articles, including photographs, drawings, pictures, fancy-work, and a few books. She wished me to examine the drawings, which she had executed herself; they represented rare scenery, birds, trees, and flowers, and were, indeed, splendidly done. As for the fancy-work, it was beautiful and intricate, and to me appeared to be the work of a genius.

I hereupon made inquiries about the occupations of women in Neuroomia. She said that, besides being housekeepers, etc., they were poets, writers, journalists, doctors, musicians, and actresses; that they also did outside work, as a certain amount of outdoor exercise was considered essential to good health; that many were experts at cultivating shrubs, plants, and flowers, and that those living near the sea and lakes could fish, row, and swim.

"Have you any lady governors or legislators in Neuroomia?" I asked.

The reply was "No! The women of Neuroomia take no part in politics, for they themselves consider that politics are beyond the sphere of women; and as for filling important offices, there were always plenty able men willing to represent the people and make laws. Further, that in the occupations she had already mentioned, she was of the opinion that women had a very wide field for the exercise of their varied tastes and talents."

"Have you any societies for advocating 'Women's Rights'?" I asked.

"No!" was the answer. "We have no societies of any kind in Neuroomia, for we have no use for them." She continued, "The women are respected and highly esteemed by the men, and they have as much liberty as they choose; but of course they are always very careful not to abuse that liberty."

We now discussed the divorce laws. She said that, although it was a very easy matter to get a divorce in Neuroomia, yet during the last five hundred years there was only one applicant. She went on, that husbands and wives loved one another with a love which, as a general rule, grew

stronger as time wore on. They also loved their children, their country, and their surroundings.

I now learnt for the first time, that, notwithstanding the apparently practical character of the people, life in Neuroomia was surrounded by a perpetual halo of dreamy, poetic, and romantic influences, which were highly favourable to the propagation of noble ideas and congenial to love. Apart from the soothing nature of a climate which burning summers and severe winters know not, every locality had its legends and traditions, some of them, indeed, very old, and handed down from pre-historic times, yet nevertheless interesting; many, on account of their stretch of imagination; others, for the morals they contained; others, again, for giving an insight, however slight, into the manners and customs of generations now almost lost in the twilight of time.

Here Vandalia gave me a sketch of her own life. She was the eldest of the family, and was born twenty-four years ago, on a farm in the mountains near Tehana. Her father at that time reared herds of olgommeras and flanillas; also cultivated the ground, and grew grain and fruits. Their house was in a picturesque neighbourhood, on the slope of a hill, just above a rapid stream

that made an everlasting murmur as it tumbled over rock and precipice on its way to the sea. Here the days of childhood and early girlhood passed away, the years succeeding one another in a poetic and uneventful manner, but leaving behind them a memory that she would cherish till the end. She wandered with her playmates along the running stream or through woods of blossoming trees. Of course, even at this time, her life was not all play, for she had to assist her mother with her daily duties, and attend to the tasks of her tutor—a lady relation of her mother.

I presumed she had a lover.

Yes! she had a lover, and one that made her existence a round of constant happiness; but an event occurred in her seventeenth year which threw an immovable cloud over the future. On one occasion, while walking along the bank of the river, which was swollen by the early summer rains, they noticed a bunch of rare blossom on a tree overhanging the stream. He said that he would secure them for her, and this was not an unusual thing for him to do. Still, she felt a cold chill pass over her, as if some evil were impending, and became alarmed for his safety. She entreated him not to go, but he was already out on the branch,

and as buoyant as ever. With heaving heart she watched him approach the blossom. He stretched out his hand, and it was almost within his grasp, when the branch gave way. He fell, still clinging to the broken limb, and though he was a good swimmer, never came to the surface again.

Did she try to save him?

Of course she tried to save him, plunging in at once and diving for him, but was herself carried away by the torrent, and in the end rescued by a man who saw her descending with the stream. This he did at the risk of his own life, for she was only a little distance above a precipice when he first beheld her.

Soon afterwards her father became a legislator, and they removed to Tehana, where for the next four years she attended one of the State schools—all the schools in Neuroomia being supported and controlled by the State—to complete her education. Since her father became governor, they had a great many visitors, and attended many gatherings; yet she pined for her lost lover and mountain home.

I felt deeply interested in this sad, beautiful girl, and was inclined to say words of comfort; but she resumed, that it was time I had another sleep; then,

wishing me rest, departed. However, I did not sleep for a long time, and when I did, it was only to dream of a sweet face and golden hair. On waking, I looked at the time, and saw that I had slept long. However, I felt much benefited by it, and thought that I would like to get up.

I should here state that the long day in Neuroomia is divided, like that of our own, into fractions, for the sake of convenience, and these are indicated with great accuracy by their timepieces.

I now began to wonder how long Vandalia would be absent, when the door opened, and Dr. Exelexeto made his appearance.

"Ah! awake again! Looking well, though. Just as I expected. Let me feel your neck. Fever nearly gone. Must give you an overhauling, though. Swallow this."

"How about my hair, doctor?" I interjected. "Will it ever grow again?"

"How old are you?" he demanded.

"I was fifty."

"Fifty, eh!" he exclaimed. "Why, I thought by your appearance that you must at least be one hundred and fifty! Why, you are only a boy yet! Grow? Yes; I haven't the least doubt it will, and your eyebrows and eyelashes too."

This was indeed consoling, and I believe did me more good than his medicine.

He now began to examine me and take off the bandages. When he had uncovered my head, he got a glass and brought it to me.

"Here," he said, "look for yourself. I know you are vain."

I grasped it eagerly, and could see a few dark hairs making their appearance on my smooth crown. I next looked for the eyebrows and eyelashes—they were just beginning to grow.

"That'll do," he said, taking the glass away. "I shall have a look at your wounds. Hold your head well down: it won't drop off. Yes, very satisfactory indeed—nearly healed. Now for your back. No! that will not do. Lie flat on your chest. Had a narrow escape. Bad place, very close to the spine. Soon be all right. That'll do. Need not cover your head up again. Give the hair room to grow. Visitors anxious to see you. Fourteen newspaper reporters called little while ago. Sent them all away. Made inquiries about your health. Several paragraphs about you in Tehana journals. Soon be a new man. Better than before."

"Will I get my teeth again, doctor?" I asked.

"Yes, my lad," was the response, "better than

the last—pearly white ones this time. Those you lost terribly discoloured. Eat more food. Will leave you to the young lady: she'll look after you. Very patient girl."

The door now opened, and the doctor disappeared.

I was alone, and felt extremely happy. Yes! the doctor was right—I should be a new man at no distant date: new hair, new beard, eyebrows and eyelashes. This was indeed benefitting by the change. If ever I went back to Australia, how I should surprise my friends! Of course they would not know me, but then there were several little incidents, etc., etc., by which I could prove to them that I was the real Periwinkle. Did I hear footsteps? Yes, I was right. It was Vandalia. How beautiful she looked as she entered the room!

She approached and said she had brought some food that the doctor had recommended, and was pleased to see me in such high spirits.

Here I related the good news the doctor gave me.

She said that recently I had changed for the better wonderfully.

We now talked of Dr. Exelexeto. She said that although he was eccentric, and at times inclined to

be abrupt and impatient, yet he was naturally of a kind and benevolent disposition, and always sympathised with his patients, also that he was considered to be one of the ablest physicians in Tehana. She now asked me if I should care to read. I answered in the affirmative, saying that I thought I would like to see the late newspapers, whereupon she went away and soon returned with an armful, which she placed on the table, and began to sort, saying that she was selecting those containing paragraphs concerning myself. She also remarked that very probably many of those she laid aside contained references to me, as she as yet had found time only to look over them in a casual manner. I begged her to read the passages aloud, for I loved to listen to her sweet voice.

She began—"The *Journal Debanabanna*: 'It gives us extreme pleasure to be able to announce a wonderful improvement in the health of Captain Periwinkle, who, as our readers are already aware, came to our shores from the Great Divisions of land lying beyond the icefields. We say divisions, for we understand that Captain Periwinkle has travelled extensively, having actually circumnavigated our planet on more than one occasion, a privilege, by the way, not extended to us, on account

of our isolation. That we, however, derive many advantages from our insular position, our new visitor himself is prepared to admit, for it would appear that the relations existing between the great nations in other parts of the world have not improved by long acquaintance, as they are prepared, on the slightest provocation, real or imagined, to plunder one another, and destroy human life in the most reckless manner. It would be superfluous to comment on the bravery of the man who has survived the dangers and difficulties involved in a journey to our territory. The very fact of his appearance in our midst is of itself sufficient proof that Captain Periwinkle is no ordinary mortal.' The *Journal Belambalee*: 'The citizens of Tehana will be glad to learn of the rapid approach of Captain Periwinkle towards convalescence. As he is the first human being from the great unknown regions, as far as we know, that ever set foot in Neuroomia, we need scarcely state that he is a most welcome visitor to our shores.' The *Journal Zenara*: 'Undoubtedly the greatest event of this summer is the meteorlike appearance in our midst of a real live member of our own species, from some remote, and to us unknown, part of this world. As Captain Periwinkle did not give timely

notice of his intended visit to this Continent, the Government at Atazatlan were unable to give him a fitting reception; indeed, it appears that he was some little time in the city before the President, who was absent at the time of his arrival, was aware of the fact, and then it was intimated that he was engaged in the study of our language, and might not care to be disturbed. During his sojourn in Atazatlan, Captain Periwinkle did not in any way attempt to make himself known to the Government or public; on the contrary, he conducted himself with a modesty and reserve, frequently indicative of eminent qualities of mind and body. On his arrival in Tehana, he became the guest of the Governor; but unfortunately, owing to an accident already referred to in this journal, he was unable to be present at the intended official reception. However, we are happy to be in a position to state that he has almost completely recovered, and, notwithstanding his recent illness, there are palpable signs that Captain Periwinkle will eventually benefit immensely by the change of climate. We are only expressing the sentiment of the nation when we accord him a hearty welcome to our Continent and City, and trust that he will be sufficiently restored to health to attend the

President's Ball and other gatherings during the falls."

When she laid down the last journal, I indeed felt as if I could get up, and although I said nothing to that effect, it appears that she surmised my intentions, and said she was glad to think that I was getting so strong, but at the same time thought it would be inadvisable to attempt to rise before the arrival of the doctor. Saying this, she departed, and in a period equal to a few of our minutes, Dr. Exelexeto, for whom I felt a sincere regard from the first, was by my side.

"Hallo! what's the matter? Don't go out through the window. Might get another fall."

I here interrupted him by saying that I felt sure I was strong enough to get up.

"Very good sign. Very good sign," was the response. "Give me your hand. Yes, you may get up. No medicine this time. Newspaper paragraphs sufficient. Go to the balcony overlooking the garden."

"Will my hair be grown sufficiently. to attend the President's Ball in Atazatlan?" I inquired.

"Quite long enough. Some time yet. Will help it along."

"Do you know two young ladies in Atazatlan

named Estas and Arizenda, sisters of Banyaba?" I inquired.

"Yes! Have not seen them for a long time. Do not care much for them—too masculine."

"Have you any idea if they will be at the President's Ball?" I further queried.

"Cannot say," was the answer. "Think not. Do not mix much in society. Brother very popular, though."

I was pleased at this last piece of intelligence, for I was not anxious to meet them again.

"They could not be taken as true samples of the Atazatlan young ladies," I remarked.

"By no means," he responded. "Too matter-of-fact. Early education and training partially neglected. Some good qualities, though. Will see you again," and the doctor was gone.

I now got up, and had nearly finished dressing when Yeyema entered the room. He congratulated me on my recovery, and said I looked well. When I had finished dressing, he suggested that we should go to the balcony; and as it was on the same floor as my room, I reached it with little effort. Yeyema also took a seat there, and began to relate how they had found me after the accident.

It appears that he did not remain long with the

legislator, and on his return to the vehicle, asked as to my whereabouts. They told him I had walked a little distance along the street, then mounted a flanilla, and proceeded farther in the same direction, and that if they followed, doubtless they would meet we coming back.

"We did not go far, however," he continued, "when we met the flanilla coming back riderless. I conjectured that you might have got a fall, so we proceeded at full speed till we saw you. You were lying on your back, senseless of course, beside two pools of blood, and apparently dead."

Vandalia now returned, bringing us some fresh fruit, but did not remain long.

I found the balcony a charming place, and the garden below appeared to be well supplied with fruits and flowers. I made some reference to the President's Ball. He said it was held annually, and was the general signal for the commencement of the Fall Holidays, which lasted about three months, *i.e.* till the sun disappeared below the horizon.

"You have long holidays," I interjected.

"Yes," was the reply. "Formerly they were not so long. However, we find that the country is just as prosperous (generally believed to be more so) as it was during the period referred to. When

the holidays are over, the people work with renewed energy, and for a time probably longer hours. The true cause of the length of our holiday is that the fall with us is not a busy time. The harvesting is over, and little remains to be done till the sun has set, and in some instances for some time after. It is during the succeeding period of twilight that the ground is prepared and the seed sown for the following year."

"Then it is not too dark to work," I remarked.

"No," was the reply; "this period is the working season in Neuroomia—the busy time of our year. Then the mines and manufactories of various kinds are working full time—deducting, of course, the intervals set apart for eating and sleeping. Then the roads and metal lines are improved and fresh ones commenced, ships are built, schools are in operation, and learned men at their duties. Then, too, our Parliament commences its sittings, writers and poets repair to their studios, and nearly all the places of amusement are closed. Of course there are certain occupations that must be carried on uninterruptedly, but that difficulty is got over by our relieving system."

"Does the Government, then, fix the hours of labour?" I inquired.

"No, certainly not," was the answer; "that would be interfering with the liberty of the individual. In Neuroomia, throughout the year, any one may work whenever it suits him, and as long as he pleases."

"How about the paid servants of the State?" I asked.

"They, of course," was the answer, "have specified hours, like those employed by private enterprise; but they have perfect liberty to quit the service whenever it suits them, and enter it again whenever they choose."

"You have no unemployed, then?" I said.

"No," was the reply. "The State undertakes to find employment for all who seek it."

"Not as overseers and high officials?" I remarked.

"No, certainly not," was the response; "but as labourers on reproductive works. We have Government mines, manufactories, farms, ships, and the Government has also charge of all the roads and metal lines."

"And is the Government able at all times to absorb all the available labour without loss or disadvantage to the country?"

"Yes. On the contrary, the industries men-

tioned are worked at a profit to the State," was the reply. "In some instances," he continued, "works have to be temporarily suspended, or fewer hands employed, owing to private enterprise holding out greater inducements to employés than the Government."

"The State, then, competes with private enterprise?" I interjected.

"It might appear so at first," was the answer; "yet that can hardly be said to be the case. For the remuneration paid by the Government to its employés is always slightly less than that paid by private enterprise for similar work. There are also cases where State industries have to cease operations owing to the supply of the articles produced becoming greater than the demand. But, of course," he continued, "private industries are also influenced by this law of supply and demand in a like manner." He went on, "Hitherto we have been speaking of the law of supply and demand in regard to commodities (influenced, of course, by consumption); but the supply and demand of labour is not only influenced, but to a large extent regulated, by our land laws and many other conditions. For instance, no man under thirty can obtain a lease of land from the Government; so

that the great bulk of those employed by the State on salaries, and by private enterprise as well, are under that age. The majority of them, on reaching thirty, or a greater age, withdraw from the service, obtain land, settle down, and make homes for themselves, many of them afterwards becoming representatives of the people and filling high offices."

I now heard footsteps approaching, and Dr. Exelexeto appeared on the scene.

"Talking politics, eh! Not good for you yet,—might affect the growth of your hair. Something more cheerful. Chat with a young lady. What do you say, Governor?" turning to Yeyema. Then, without waiting for a reply, continued, "Have been to Tehana. Monster excursion in preparation."

"Have you many patients now, doctor?" inquired the Governor.

"No," was the quick response; "only two. They nearly well; approaching gatherings curing them—city getting a holiday appearance—workshops already closing—long holidays this year—don't stay up too long—must be going—have to attend a meeting," and the doctor disappeared as suddenly as he came.

He was scarcely gone, however, when Vandalia

arrived, bringing letters to her father. She said there were visitors in the reception room waiting to see him. There was a letter for me from Ilaclatella, but not a word from Louva. This annoyed me much. On opening the letter, I found that it was very short, but extremely kind. Among other things, Ilaclatella congratulated me on my speedy recovery, and hoped that I would enjoy my stay in Tehana.

Yeyema now took his leave, and Vandalia remained with me. I asked her if she had yet heard of the monster expedition the doctor referred to.

"Yes, she had heard of it. They were fitting up the *Dorondoro*, one of their floating villages, for a trip to Scalascala, the city nearest the ice-fields, and in the volcanic territory. "However," she continued, "it would probably not leave Tehana till after the President's Ball, for there were seldom many important excursions before that event. I asked her if she were going to attend the ball. She said, yes, that she would be attending all the important gatherings in Neuroomia during the falls; that she usually went with her father, and expected that they would be kept going almost constantly, as it was believed there would be an unusually gay season this year. I was glad of

this, and passed my hand quickly over my head. She went on, that I was fortunate to have recovered so soon, for she knew that that there were more invitations to gatherings in store for me than I could possibly attend. However, she believed that I would be able to enjoy myself, and see a lot of Neuroomia and its people. She here suggested, if I felt inclined to walk, "that we go round the balcony to the front of the house." Of course I consented, and beheld a scene that was pleasing in the highest degree, for Yeyema's house was situated on a high hill overlooking the sea and adjacent territory. I could now see that Tehana was built on the head of a promontory that went some distance out into the water, out of which the tops of the hills rose, many of them to a great height, forming precipitous islets, very rugged, but, at the same time, very picturesque. There was the great city itself, with its circular streets, gently rising amid the foliage in the form of terraces, and the glorious Polar Fountain, with its everlasting rainbows in the centre. I gazed for some time at this picture, then said that I thought it even more lovely than Atazatlan and its surroundings.

"Yes," she answered, "Tehana is not only the

greatest, but is also considered to be the most beautiful city in Neuroomia."

I wondered why it was not the capital. She said this was principally owing to a legend of Atazatlan, and also to the fact that the latter had been the first and only capital of the continent, and on this account the people were reluctant to make a change. I felt curious concerning the legend, and inquired if it were true. She answered, that was a difficult matter to determine, but whether true or false (believed in the main to be true), it had a powerful influence, and for the better, over the people of Neuroomia for countless generations, even up to the present time.

I now felt more interested than ever, and begged her to relate it. She said it was long; however, that she would endeavour to give me an outline of it. She began in a soft, musical voice and suppressed tone, appearing as if some slight effort were required to control her emotions,—

"Very long, long ago, when the periods of sunshine and twilight were longer than now, Neuroomia was peopled by tribes who wandered by the great rivers and lakes, or made temporary camps near the sea-shore. It was then that the tribe of the Reni came and occupied a small clear-

ing where Atazatlan now stands. There were few such clearings in those remote times, for the trees were of enormous size, and the country was covered with dark forests, in the gloomy recesses of which huge and unwieldy animals, very fierce and strong, luxuriated in the dense vegetation or preyed upon one another, without fear of being molested by man.

"The tribes were few and scattered, holding little intercourse with each other, and subsisted upon the animals, fruits, and fishes that the land and water offered them in abundance. There was little change in their condition, and for ages they dozed away an existence as dreary as their surroundings. The Reni lived a long time on the clearing, and made their camp or village there. It was during this period that Molopozi appeared among them. Whence he came, and whither he departed, no one knew. He was not their chief, for he refused to rule; yet he remained with them a long time, was loved by the tribe, and by his utterances and counsels gave that turn to thought from which the people of Neuroomia have never wavered. He eventually gave them a code of rules for their guidance. This code has been the basis of all law in Neuroomia up to the present time. He taught them how to heal the sick, build better

houses and boats, make clothes for themselves from various plants, and to turn over the soil and sow the seed. He counselled them not to injure one another; this he considered to be the foundation of all his teaching. They were to sympathise with, and endeavour to assist, each other always. He advised them not to quarrel over the land, which belonged to them all. He predicted that in future ages those great forests would disappear, and that the land would contain only one great and prosperous people. During the long period he was with them time did not in any way change his handsome face and form, and as he loved a beautiful maiden of the tribe, it was thought probable that he would always remain to advise and comfort them. But the maid he loved was carried off by one of the great monsters of the forest, and never returned. It was believed that she had not been slain, but had become an inhabitant of the wilds, and at long intervals of time used to meet her mysterious lover.

"Time wore on, and the Reni became wise, prosperous, and numerous; they made longer voyages along their coasts, reached many of the islands, and invited from the neighbouring tribes chiefs and others who saw the happy condition of the

people. These chiefs were interviewed and taught by Molopozi himself, and on their return, made him known to their own people, who set to work to follow the example of the Reni.

"Thus his influence became extended; indeed, according to some legends—for there are many concerning him—he personally visited and taught many of the other tribes, but dwelt with the Reni only. From the first, however, he was in the habit of taking long journeys away from them, sometimes through the forests, at other times in his boat, but always alone. Yet he returned, and the people were glad to see him again. They chided him not, nor did they ever make any inquiries concerning his absence. One time he remained with them so long without taking his usual journeys that the people began to think he had given over his travels, and felt happy that he was content to remain with them, for often during the time he was away they felt anxious, and were afraid some danger might overtake him. Their fond hopes, however, were not to be realized, for towards the end of the summer, just before the sun went down, he called the chiefs and heads of families together, and told them he was going to a distant land, and would be absent for a long time, but

that he would not forget them, and would return again when the sun was shining.

"He then began to take his leave of the people, who were very sorrowful. They asked him if there was anything he wished them to do during his absence. He answered, Yes, to follow his counsels till he returned. He then departed through the forest, in the direction of the great river, and was lost to view. The summers came and went, but he returned not. Yet, many of the hunters averred that when the moon shone through the twilight in the remote parts of the forest, they heard sounds like his voice, and saw forms like his and the maid he loved. They called to him, but he heeded them not, and both forms vanished in the shadows. Nor did he ever return. Yet the people of Neuroomia followed his counsels and revered his memory."

CHAPTER V.

CAPTAIN PERIWINKLE ENJOYS A PROLONGED HOLIDAY.

I WAS now ready; yes, ready! for I had forgotten nothing. The vehicle, however, was not yet brought up, and as I had nothing else to occupy my attention, I walked into the reception room to have one more look at the mirror. I felt much pleased with myself and my appearance, for I was no longer the Captain Periwinkle who came to Atazatlan about three months before, but the Periwinkle of five-and-twenty years ago. Yes, I had indeed changed. My head was now covered with a thick mass of black hair, and my dark-brown beard and moustache were more glossy than I ever knew them to be before, while my eyebrows and eyelashes were long and smooth. Nor was the change least noticeable in my figure, which had sensibly diminished. I was much thinner, and appeared taller. My muscles were no longer burdened with redundant fat, and I felt extremely active, just in good trim for dancing. Indeed, I felt so much

that way, that I could not help indulging in a series of leaps occasionally. I examined my toilet very carefully; the fit was perfect. My cloak fell over my shoulders in an elegant manner, and the cap was becoming. I smiled as I intended to smile at the ball, and saw my teeth. They were not full-grown as yet, but very white and even. I shook my feet; everything was right. One more side look at the mirror, and I was leaving the room, when I met Yeyema, who said they were ready.

The party, a small one, consisting of Yeyema, Vandalia, myself, and a few others, ascended the vehicle, and we soon found ourselves driving through Tehana, past the Great Fountain, and on our way to the wharf. On our arrival there, we found Yeyema's launch, the *Pelides,* waiting for us. I expected the company would be larger. Yeyema, however, informed me that nearly the whole of those who intended going to the ball had already gone.

The trip was a pleasant one. The *Pelides* cut through the water with wonderful velocity. We passed one of the floating villages on its way to Atazatlan, laden with people, who were having a ball of their own on board, no doubt by way of a preliminary.

Numbers of fishes of different sizes, and beautifully marked, kept constantly leaping high up out of the water. Some fell on the deck, but leaped back into the sea almost immédiately by a peculiar kind of jerk. At the same time a cloud of sea-birds, of varied plumage and voice, hovered above and around us. Thus we sped on through fishes and birds, leaving behind us only a long narrow trail to show where we had passed.

Vandalia looked superb, and was cheerful, amusing herself by throwing crumbs to the birds, that eagerly watched every movement of her hand. Yeyema talked much, and appeared very happy, yet on more than one occasion since we left Tehana I noticed a cloud pass over his brow, and wondered why this should be.

Long before we got near Atazatlan, we had to travel at less than half speed, owing to the vast number of ships (all swarmed with people) arriving and departing. Probably a number equal to those arriving were leaving, and on seeking an explanation, Vandalia informed me there were several balls, excursions, picnics, and gatherings of various kinds about to take place in different localities. Even in Atazatlan itself, the President's Ball was not the only attraction. There would be several

similar and simultaneous gatherings, many of them on a larger and equally grand scale. The President's Ball, however, would take precedence in regard to time, and would be the first to open.

I here made inquiries about the probable belle and the ladies' dresses. She answered that among so many thousands I should find it an impossibility to single out any young lady as being superior in appearance to all the others—their girls were so much alike. Besides, this was a matter that did not attract attention at gatherings in Neuroomia. With regard to dress, they would all be elegantly dressed, and have a holiday appearance. However, if any lady should endeavour to render herself conspicuous by her dress, she would be noted only for her folly.

We were now approaching the city. There was Atazatlan, just as beautiful as when I first beheld it from the mountains. I should soon enter it for the second time, and there probably meet some of my former acquaintances.

Would Louva be at the ball? I asked of myself more than once; and yet there could only be one answer to this query. There was no doubt both she and her father would be present. Sometimes, however, I fancied that I did not feel so

much interested in her now, that fever having gone a long way towards curing me of my passion for her; and besides, it was said that she had another lover. I had not heard from her since she left Tehana, and felt she must be getting indifferent. However, I determined not to pay her much attention at the ball, but at the same time to take notice of what occurred. In fact, I decided to act the diplomatist in the matter, and await the course of events at present.

My soliloquy was now broken by Vandalia, who asked me some question about my travels. Indeed, we got into such earnest conversation over the matter, that I paid no attention to the people on the jetty we were approaching. Judge my surprise, however, when the boat stopped, to see Louva and her father standing alongside. It appears they were aware of the time we should arrive, and came down to meet us, as Ilaclatella intended to convey us in his own vehicle to the ball. I was glad to see my old friend again. He was as entertaining as ever, and welcomed me back to Atazatlan. Louva looked as lovely as before, and glanced at me very keenly. I knew that she was surprised at the change. However, I pretended not to notice this. She regretted that I had suffered so much,

congratulated me on my recovery, and complimented me on my appearance. Yet I could not help thinking that she was more reserved than usual.

On our way to the residence of the President, we passed throngs of people going to and fro. Some were walking, but the majority were in vehicles. The city looked gay, and there were signs of happiness on every side. The ladies took their seats in the rear of the vehicle, and kept up a conversation among themselves. We occupied the front, and discussed various matters.

Soon after leaving the city, we entered a forest of many kinds of trees, and went along a winding avenue, ascending higher and higher till we could see the sea and city underneath. I could now see the buildings and people ahead, and wondered we had passed through no gateway. I referred to this, and Yeyema remarked the grounds were not enclosed, as there was no occasion for it. I asked if their animals might not stray into them. He replied the animals cropped the herbage only, and did not injure the trees.

On arrival, I was surprised at the grandeur of the edifice, for as yet I had seen none like it in Neuroomia. The entrance was very wide, and sup-

ported by enormous pillars, ornamental work and beauty of design being everywhere conspicuous. The extensive lawns were covered with people, who either conversed in groups, or walked through the grounds, whilst vast numbers kept constantly passing in and out of the building. We passed through the multitude, and entered a large room, from which a view could be obtained of several others equally grand. I had never seen anything like them in the world before. The palaces of India faded into insignificance when compared to this. The effect produced upon me was such that I thought the whole more like a dream of some enchanted land than sober reality. We stopped near the centre, where a small group of men were conversing, and Yeyema presented me to Onneyubla, Yuengai or President of Neuroomia for the time being.

On behalf of the people he welcomed me to their territory, then made inquiries about the *Penguin* and the remainder of the crew. I told him where they were, and he suggested that they also should be brought to Atazatlan. There was nothing very striking in the appearance of this great personage, who was a small man, rather past middle age; yet when he spoke, his voice was con-

ciliating and his manner attractable. The cares of office had neither furrowed his brow nor distorted his countenance, and he appeared pleased with himself and his surroundings. Still, notwithstanding his apparently affable and careless disposition, there was something indescribable about him that impressed his hearers and commanded respect.

We did not remain long in his company, but passed into one of the large adjoining rooms, where a banquet was evidently in preparation. This, I understood, was the custom in Atazatlan, and was held by way of a preliminary to the ball. Here I met a large number of persons holding high offices and other responsible positions in the State. There was a large and very long table in the centre of the room, with a number of smaller ones on either side. When all was ready, the President took his seat at the head of the principal, the governors of the different States occupying similar positions at the smaller ones. The tables were attended to by members of both sexes, and a very large number of ladies were present at the banquet.

The President made a short speech, beginning as follows:—

"This year an event has taken place that will form a remarkable chapter in the history of Neuroomia—

I refer to the arrival of our guest, Captain Periwinkle, from another southern continent almost as large as our own, a great portion of which is now peopled by a race similar to ourselves. As far as we know, the event is without a parallel, and very probably may not be repeated for ages; yet it shows that communication with the other great divisions of our planet is not altogether impossible, although it is known the opportunities occur only at rare intervals. That some of our own people have reached other lands is beyond question, yet not one has ever been able to return to tell the tale. I trust that Captain Periwinkle will find the conditions of life in Neuroomia sufficiently favourable to induce him to remain with us. However, should he eventually desire to return to his own land, of which he has doubtless many pleasant recollections, the Government will be pleased to assist him in every way possible."

He then referred to the annual ball, the improvements and discoveries of the year, their continued prosperity, the approaching general election, the policy of the Government, and the brightness of their future prospects. The Governors then made short speeches, and the meeting proved a happy affair.

After the banquet, the people began to stream into the ballroom, where fresh blossoms and growing flowers were displayed in abundance. At a given hour the ball was declared open by the vice-Yuengai, and it was, to say the least of it, a gorgeous spectacle. The enormous size and grandeur of the room, the magnificence of the decorations, the great concourse of people, the splendour of the surroundings, the sweetness of the varied strains of music, and, above all, the wonderful beauty of the women, eclipsed all my former remembrances of similar gatherings.

The music was playing, the people still arriving, and the first dance about to commence. Of course I was not acquainted with it, but I felt elevated; the scene had its effect upon me, and I thought I would like to join. They appeared to be going in couples, so I sought out Vandalia, who became my partner. They formed several rows round the building, then began to move about, at first in what I considered a simple manner, and I got on well; but after a time the rows appeared to get mixed, and the movements became more intricate. They spun round at a rapid rate, and changed partners frequently—indeed, so frequently, that I lost mine altogether, and became giddy. There was a pecu-

liarity in the floor that I did not understand; still, I spun round with the others, and got fresh partners. On one or two occasions I nearly lost my balance, but managed to keep up by clinging on to the ladies. However, after an unusually quick spin, I missed my partner and fell heavily to the floor, one young lady tripping over me. I was not, however, allowed to remain long in a prostrate position, for almost immediately I felt some one take hold of my arm with an iron grip, just like the grip of Estas.

On looking up, I found I was right, for it was none other than herself—the lady I had tripped. I endeavoured to wrench my arm from her grasp, but the attempt was useless, for she quickly secured the other, then dragged me a little distance to a seat near the wall, then left me without uttering a word. Of course I was in a rage, and do not remember what I said—probably, however, something that she could not appreciate, for I did not meet her again.

I now rested for a time, contemplating the dance, then passed into the banquet room, where there was a large number of men, who, I understood, never danced, but who nevertheless, judging from their conversation, enjoyed themselves; so I re-

mained with them, and related stories of whale-fishing and other adventures, then in turn listened to many happy anecdotes and interesting legends of Neuroomia and its people. However, I was curious to know how things were proceeding in the ball-room, so after some time I returned thither, and took a raised seat near the door. I could now plainly see how absurd it would be for any one to attempt to discover who was belle of this great gathering. Here, indeed, was a beautiful blonde, but then there were several beautiful blondes; and for a moment I supposed there could be none to eclipse the brunette opposite. However, a second glance convinced me of the fallacy of this supposition, for in beauty there were many brunettes equal, if not superior, to her. I noticed Louva, and also noticed that wherever I saw her, she was accompanied by a young man—a stranger to me—and I confess that in reference to her choice I could not appreciate her taste or judgment; for, compared to the other men who were present, it could not be said of her favourite that his appearance was prepossessing. I saw Vandalia occasionally; her company was much sought after. However, there did not appear to be any particular one specially attentive to her. Once or twice Arizenda

passed close to me, but I did not see her, as I had no desire to renew our acquaintance.

After one of the dances was over, Louva, who happened to be standing near me, remarked that she had not seen me dancing. Of course I was not sorry for this; however, I replied that I had had *one*. Hereupon we commenced a conversation, and I proposed that we should have a ramble through the grounds together. Here we found many couples, evidently lovers. The surroundings were extremely beautiful, and I felt romantic. I thought of similar walks long, long ago in another continent—and the young lady, where was she? I knew not,—she jilted me for a bush missionary. However, she must be faded. I looked into Louva's sweet face: she returned the compliment, I thought, in a loving manner, and said,—

"You have changed much in appearance, and I also think in manner, since you left Atazatlan."

"I believe that I have changed in appearance," I answered, "but am aware of no perceptible change in manner."

"I have thought more than once since we met on the wharf that I must have displeased you in some way," was the reply.

"No, you have not displeased me," I answered;

"but as I did not hear from you after you left Tehana, I came to the conclusion that you had forgotten me."

"It was unkind of you to think so," she said, "considering that I flew to Tehana to see you. And again," she continued, "I expected that when you got well, my visit would at least be recognised, although, on reflecting, I found that I had little reason for entertaining the idea, for you were attended during your illness by a very attractive young lady."

"You then expected to hear from me?" I said.

"Yes!" was the answer.

"A misunderstanding," I exclaimed. "We shall forget about this matter."

"The young ladies of Neuroomia cannot forget slights so readily," was the measured reply.

I felt confused at this, and thought of the ungainly young man in the ballroom.

"Perhaps," I said, "the worthy who has been so attentive to you of late may feel despondent at your absence."

"He at least did not accompany me here," was the answer, "and I trust that he has sufficient confidence in me not to feel concerned about my absence from the ballroom, even with another."

Here what might have terminated in a stormy conversation was interrupted by my old and esteemed friend, Folbrizzio, who happened to be coming, accompanied by a lady, from the opposite direction. I was anxious to see him, so we conversed for some time, then formed an appointment to meet later on. In the meantime, the ladies were discussing, though not with a gravity becoming their subject, the merits and demerits of the members of the stronger sex whom they met at the ball; for I regret to relate that even the young ladies of Neuroomia possess this weakness, though not to the extent that it prevails elsewhere. The conversation, however, must have been of an edifying character, for if it did not elevate, it at least gave a more cheerful tone to the thoughts of Louva, and we walked on through the splendid avenues till we came to one leading back to the ballroom. This we took. Louva now appeared to advantage, and I thought her more beautiful than ever.

In reply to a jocular remark, she said that she loved none. This raised my hopes, for I now began to discover the truth, sweet or bitter, that I loved her much, yet I felt uncertain if my passion were returned. I conducted her to the ballroom, and there we parted, as the hour at which I had

arranged to meet Folbrizzio was approaching. However, I did not leave the room at once, but foxed her through the crowd, and saw with regret that she again joined her clownish friend.

I now repaired to the banquet hall, where I met Folbrizzio. He referred to Louva.

"Who is the young man with whom she has danced so much?" I inquired.

"His name is Lackflackima," was the answer, "and he has charge of the Island of Candilia, where the few persons who have had the misfortune, through accident or other cause, to have become deranged, are confined."

"Is that considered to be a high position in Neuroomia?" I asked.

"By no means," was the response. "Yet it is one of those few care to occupy, and is therefore highly remunerated."

I now felt disgusted to think that the woman I loved should be so matter-of-fact and destitute of romance.

"Does she really love him?" I demanded.

"That is a difficult question for me to answer," was the reply; "for I have not often met them together, nor do I think she has known him long. However," he continued, "if you desire to win the

young lady, you had better remain in Atazatlan for the present."

I said that I would not remain here for that purpose.

The President now came towards us, and invited me to remain after the ball as his guest. He said that he would endeavour to bring those I left with the *Penguin* to Atazatlan; that is, if I intended to remain long in Neuroomia.

I now thought of Louva, and felt dejected; there was little doubt that she loved another, and the idea of leaving Neuroomia presented itself to me. I thought that I would like to see Australia again; and then there was Septimus—I would like to punish Septimus Robinson for his treachery.

I said that I was very much pleased with Neuroomia and its people—that although I had been to nearly all the civilized countries in the world, I had never before witnessed such happiness and prosperity, and that I should never forget the kindness I had received at their hands. Yet I had not quite decided whether I should remain permanently or not; that there was one of the crew who had deceived me, and I was anxious that he should not escape the punishment which he so richly merited, and that on our return

to Australia he would be indicted by our own laws.

He then inquired concerning the nature of the offence, and where it had been committed; so I explained the whole affair to him.

He answered, that we were on Neuroomian territory at the time, and that he was amenable to to their laws, if I chose to take further action in the matter.

However, I was doubtful if the lenient laws of Neuroomia would inflict on Septimus a punishment at all commensurate with the heinousness of his crime. So I made inquiries as to the nature of the sentence he would be likely to receive.

He said the offence I mentioned would probably be treated as a breach of trust, and that if he were found guilty, he would be prohibited from holding any high office in the country for some time, and that his right to occupy land would be delayed.

Whereupon I instantly replied that Septimus would consider this "no punishment at all"; that our laws were much more severe, and that I had the right to put and keep him in irons till we reached Australia.

He said that I might require his services, as he was a good seaman, in navigating the ship through

the broken ice; however, he believed that it was now probably too late in the summer to attempt to get through the icefields, but that the principal geographer would be able to give me information about the matter.

The people now began to come in from the ball-room, for the second banquet was nearly ready, and the President left to take his seat at the principal table; so I went back to seek Vandalia and her father, to tell them that I would not be returning with them to Tehana. The music had ceased, and the ball was over; still, there was a large number of people in the room, and among them I noticed Louva in earnest conversation with her friend. I met the Governor and his daughter coming towards the door, and returned with them to the banquet-room. Yeyema took his seat at the head of his table, and I sat beside Vandalia, and told her of my intended visit to the *Penguin*, and the possibility of my leaving Neuroomia at an early date.

She said that I should at least remain till the following summer, and take a holiday after my sickness, for I could not as yet be very strong.

I liked the idea of having a holiday and seeing more of Neuroomia, and deeply regretted leaving Vandalia and the many kind friends I had made

since my arrival here. If I could only forget Louva! I clenched my teeth, as I had often done before on the *Penguin*, and clasped my knife more tightly in my hand. *I would try to forget her.*

I enjoyed the second banquet even more than the first, for I met many beautiful young ladies and others who endeavoured to persuade me to prolong my visit. I felt as if I could not leave this genuine and generous people, and, indeed, before the banquet was over, I had abandoned the idea of leaving Neuroomia for the present.

But the difficulty was, how to be revenged on Septimus; that was the question. If he were tried in Australia, still it was possible he might escape, even if I charged him with conspiracy and mutiny; for he would very probably engage a lawyer. Yes! Septimus had money, and would engage a lawyer—scheming dog! What was to be done? I would punish Septimus Adolphus Robinson myself!

The great bulk of the visitors had now taken their departure, and those at the palace began to retire. I felt sleepy myself, so I followed the example of the latter, and sank into an extremely soft bed, twisted myself a few times, then turned on my back, fell asleep, and very probably snored; for I generally snore after a banquet.

On waking, I began to think out a decision concerning the future. The more I considered the idea of returning, the more foolish it appeared. I would like to make the existence of this happy land known to the world; but then there was no certainty that we could get through the icefields. I had property in Sydney, but why should I trouble about that? I should in all likelihood attain a greater age here, and be happier than if I returned. I might not be quite so rich, but, on the other hand, there was at least no danger of being poor. I thought of my friends in other lands, but where could I find friends more steadfast than those I had already made in Neuroomia? No! I would not return. I would go to the *Penguin*, and bring the crew back with me to Atazatlan. As for Septimus, I had arranged a little plan of my own to meet his case.

I now got up, feeling a wiser man, completed my toilet, and repaired to the dining hall, where I met Onneyubla. During the course of our meal, I made my decision known to him.

He said that not only would all the rights of citizenship be conferred upon me, but that it was the intention of the Government to grant me special privileges as well. With regard to my intended

visit to the *Penguin*, he considered it advisable that I should be accompanied by two persons from Atazatlan to act as guides. He did not know the exact position of the vessel himself, but was of the opinion that there was a better route than the one by which I came. However, it would be necessary to consult Yondozi, the principal geographer, in the matter. He would not be in his Atazatlan studio at present; however, he had an idea as to his whereabouts, and would send for him at once. He then took a card, and having written something on it, gave it to an attendant. He now inquired what I intended to do with the *Penguin*.

I replied, "Nothing; but leave her where she was."

He said the Government were willing to purchase her from me, with a view to exhibit her in one of their museums; that is, if they could manage to get her to Atazatlan.

I said that I would not sell her, but that I would be very much pleased to present her as a gift to the Government.

He accepted, and expressed a hope that I would ere long have the pleasure of seeing her anchored safely in the principal museum of their capital.

We now left the dining hall and went into a

large room, where several maps of Neuroomia hung upon the walls; there were also many diagrams, casts, and instruments of different kinds. He informed me this was the room used for consultations with Yondozi when he came to the palace.

I felt interested, examined the scale of one of the maps, and found that Neuroomia was much larger than Australia. I then made inquiries about the number of states or divisions, population, large cities, etc.

He said that for administrative purposes Neuroomia was at present divided into fifteen states, and that, according to the last census, the population of the whole territory was about thirty millions; that I had already seen the largest city, Tehana, which contained about a million inhabitants, but that no other city, except Atazatlan, contained half that number; that, according to their laws of settlement, it was undesirable that the population of any city should exceed one million.

"How did they check the increase?"

"By marking out and building fresh cities," was the reply.

"Then you have fresh territory still available for settlement?" I interjected.

"Yes," was the answer. "There are large tracts

of virgin soil and forest still unoccupied, and there are also large areas that have been cultivated for many years, and from which settlement is now prohibited; but these will be again available when the various terms of reservation have expired."

"Is there no danger, through the natural increase, of Neuroomia becoming overpopulated?" I asked.

"As far as we can learn," was the answer, "Neuroomia has never been overpopulated, and it certainly is not at the present time; nor can we see any signs of that being the case in the future, however remote."

I pointed out that in other parts of the world the population had actually doubled itself in twenty-five years; that this might not be wholly attributable to the natural increase,—nevertheless, that increase was great; that islands had become overpopulated, and what was true of islands might in a measure prove true of continents.

He said that according to the general nature of things, if there were a large and constant annual increase of births over deaths, any insular tract of land, particularly without any outlet for its people, must eventually become overpopulated. In Neuroomia, however, nothwithstanding the favourable conditions under which the people existed, the

increase was indeed small compared to the parts I had referred to, and this he attributed chiefly to difference in climatic conditions.

I here remarked that I had already noticed that neither their animals nor birds were so prolific as those of other regions.

He continued that they had whole forests, where the birds were seldom or never molested, and though they lived to a great age, yet the increase did not appear to be perceptible; and although it was desirable the population should increase, yet an excessive population would not be looked upon as an unmixed blessing in Neuroomia. However, there was nothing to be apprehended from what I might be pleased to consider an impending evil; indeed, it was a question that had neither demanded nor received serious consideration at their hands.

Yondozi now put in an appearance. He was a short, thick-set, intelligent-looking man, apparently about middle age, with handsome features and a pleasing expression of countenance. I liked his appearance, and knew that we should become friends. Onneyubla introduced me, and in a few words referred to my proposed trip. He then said that he would leave us to discuss matters, and took his departure.

I described to him as well as I could the natural features in the locality of the vessel, and the route travelled from it to Atazatlan.

He said he believed he understood the position of the *Penguin*, but that the surface of the country had been considerably changed by the recent volcanic disturbances, which he understood to be of an unusually violent character.

"Did these disturbances have anything to do with the breaking up of the ice in the neighbourhood of your continent?" I inquired.

"Undoubtedly," was the reply; "although the volcanoes in the territory you first visited are always more or less active. Yet were it not for the outbreak you had the privilege of witnessing, Neuroomia would still be encircled, as it has been for ages, by a zone of compact ice."

"In that case," I observed, "it would have been impossible for me to have reached Neuroomia."

"Yes, with the *Penguin*," was the answer.

"And how do you think an expedition across the ice by means of sledges would fare?" I queried.

"Very probably perish from the intense cold," was the response.

"Is the warm current that carried the *Penguin* to these shores of a permanent character?" I asked.

"No," was the reply; "it was generated through volcanic action, and will very probably cease to flow, or at least become frozen over, when the agency of subterranean heat is wholly or partially withdrawn. However," he continued, "while it is in motion there must be another counter-current leading from it on the neighbouring channels to the Great Southern Ocean."

I thought for a moment what a grand place that current would be for Septimus.

"It would, then, be possible for me to navigate my vessel back into the open sea if I so desired?" I remarked.

"Yes," was the answer. "It is almost a certainty that at the present moment there is a channel free from any obstruction leading right through the icefield to the open ocean." He continued: "The country has not been surveyed since the earthquake; however, on our return it is the intention of the Government to send out several exploring parties, who will report upon the change and draw physical maps of the territory. I say on our return," he went on, "for it is my intention, if you desire it, to accompany you back to the vessel."

I replied that I should be delighted to have

the company of a man who was in a position to impart so much knowledge "concerning sea and land."

He said that he had a knowledge of the country we should be passing through from previous travels, and that he would like to take his friend Moro, who was a geologist, with us.

I answered that I should be very pleased to leave the organizing of the expedition wholly in his hands, and that I would offer no objection even if a few young ladies were added to it.

He observed that a couple of young men would be required to look after the animals.

In due course the next meal was announced, and on this occasion we were conducted to a hall much larger than the one wherein I had previously dined. A number of people, including several ladies, took their seats at the table, the President, whom I understood was a bachelor, taking his place at the head. I was introduced to them all, however. There were two young ladies, Elmia and Alvarez, nieces to Onneyubla, who impressed me by their personal charms. Moro, the geologist, was present, and sat beside Elmia, while I occupied a seat near Alvarez. We talked first of our projected expedition, and it was decided that preparations for a start should be commenced at once.

Alvarez said she felt much interested in my ship the *Penguin*, and would be delighted to be able to pay her a visit.

Indeed, the idea of forming a second expedition, including herself and some of her lady friends, had been already discussed, but had to be abandoned on account of the difficulties attending a long journey through the mountains and rugged country that must be traversed. I knew that Alvarez did feel interested; the slight flush on her beautiful cheek, the brightness of her fine dark eyes, together with her nervous temperament, indicated the animation of her nature, and bespoke the manner in which she threw her whole soul into anything that happened to be foremost in her thoughts for the time being.

The guests now began to disperse, and Yondozi took his departure, to superintend the preparations for our trip. Meanwhile, Alvarez and myself wandered through the grounds some distance away from the palace, and found ourselves beside a small running stream that trickled, twisted, and murmured through a long romantic valley, the slopes of which were lightly timbered with forest trees. The soft rays of the sun shone through the foliage, and gave a livelier aspect to the green sward

underneath; indeed, there was such a blending of light and colour, sunshine and shade, forest, hill, and stream, that I thought it one of the loveliest scenes I had ever beheld. I expressed my ideas to Alvarez. She said she loved this charming spot, as she found it congenial and soothing to her mind, and that she often wandered here alone to pluck the growing flowers and dream the hours away; that she loved the sublime and beautiful, and not unfrequently felt a longing to see and know more of our wonderful planet.

We rested on a fallen tree overlooking the stream. Beautiful birds were above and all round us: they were very busy and happy collecting the honey from the blossoms, then flying away and returning.

Alvarez told me they were suctorial birds, storing up the honey they gathered in the hollow limbs for the months of twilight, as the trees were not then in blossom. She inquired if I had not seen many beautiful islands and countries in other parts of the world, and had not been impressed by their scenery and people?

I answered in the affirmative; but then in other parts everything changed so suddenly that happiness did not possess the permanency that character

ized it in Neuroomia. Many other lands had beautiful scenery, but it appeared to advantage during certain hours only, generally those of morning, evening, and moonlight; but the morning soon passed into the heat of noonday, the evening into night, while the pale and sombre light of the moon in turn gave way to the grey of dawn; but here it was an evening or morning for half the year.

"And what kind of girls have you in those distant regions?" she inquired.

"Many of the maidens are extremely beautiful," I said; "indeed, as beautiful as it is possible for human beings to be, but only for a very brief period—men and women fade quickly. Take myself, for instance. When I left Tasmania, one of the most favourable places in the world for our race, I was considered a young-looking man for fifty; but when I came to Atazatlan, I had the mortification to be set down for three times that age."

"How does the disposition of the most civilized inhabitants of those parts compare with that of the people of Neuroomia?" she asked.

"Not favourably," I responded. "Many of our people, young and old, were full of love, kindness,

magnanimity, energy, enthusiasm, and patriotism; but, alas! in too many cases, generally through systems, conditions of life and surroundings, these good qualities gave way to selfishness, indifference, and even despair. Here the period of existence was fully three times that of our people, while during the long space of time intervening between maturity and old age there was little change for the worse. True they were mortals, but they were happy; they lived their life and enjoyed it, quitted it with regret, frequently in the form of slumber, and without pain."

"If you keep on in that strain," she interjected, "I shall begin to feel more content with my surroundings, and less inclined to go abroad. I am aware the people of Neuroomia are happy," she continued, "but have thought it possible for an equal, if not greater, happiness to exist elsewhere. However, I believe you have already almost dispelled that idea," she went on. "I had pictured to myself, in my dreams, seas and islands more lovely than our own, human beings more perfect and fair, and flowers and birds more beautiful."

"You will, I am sure, pardon me," I said, "when I wish you to remember that it was not so

much of our happiness as of its brevity that I complained; and with regard to the scenery, I for a moment would not undertake the responsibility of saying there are not many parts of the world equal to Neuroomia in that respect, but I do say there can be none to surpass it. You must not consider me unkind or unpatriotic, for I have loved my country, and love it still, but I love Neuroomia better, and intend to pass the remainder of my days, which I trust will not be clouded by love matters, in it. I regret to think that I may have been the means of damping some of the dreams you fondly cherished; but, on the other hand, I have always thought it better to speak of things as they exist."

"You at least have not annihilated my dreams," she said, "for I feel more interested than ever in those distant lands and the people that inhabit them, and trust to hear many stories from you concerning them when you return. But what about the expedition?" she continued laughingly. "I suppose if we do not return soon, they will come to the conclusion that we are already on our way to the *Penguin*, with a view to leave Neuroomia; for they know that I am fond of travel."

I responded that perhaps we had better walk back, as Yondozi might be ready.

On our way she was very cheerful, and we discussed courtship and love affairs in Neuroomia. Yet, notwithstanding her affability, there was a dignity about this woman that repelled freedom, and a wisdom and wit in many of her sayings that commanded admiration. Of the two girls, she was from the first my favourite, and when the time for departing arrived, I had almost wished that the expedition had been abandoned, or at least delayed.

When we returned, we found everything in readiness: the animals were saddled and packed, and Yondozi suggested that we take leave of the President and our friends. So I bade farewell to my interesting companion, hoping it would only be temporary, and, in company with Yondozi and Moro, was about to repair to the palace, when we saw Onneyubla approaching. He made a few inquiries about the route we intended to take, then wished us success and a safe return.

In the meantime I attended to a few little matters connected with my pack, then mounted a flanilla for the second time without any fear of the consequence. The others now mounted theirs, and we proceeded on our journey. I happened to look

back towards one of the balconies, and there saw a number of men and women who were waving green boughs towards us, then threw their bouquets after us, and finally raised their branches in token of adieu. I could distinguish the face of Alvarez among them, and felt disappointed, for I expected that, like myself, she would feel sad; but she didn't. On the contrary, she appeared brighter than before. That face, however, haunted me for many of the hours I was absent from Atazatlan.

The expedition consisted of five men and seven flanillas. Each of the two young men led a flanilla laden with provisions and accoutrements for the journey; apart from this, each of us also carried a small pack on his animal.

Our course for a time lay through the settled country, which was well cultivated and fruitful in the highest degree, the road we travelled following a slightly elevated ridge. On the left, as far as the eye could reach, were houses, fields, animals, and orchards. Having wended our way through these for some distance, we left the principal highway, and turned to the right in the direction of the nearest mountains. This, Yondozi said, was to strike a pass that led over them, and he pointed to a gorge a little way ahead.

Here, in the glorious sunlight, we made our first halt, tethered the animals, and prepared our meal.

After it was over, I felt inclined for a smoke; but the supply of tobacco I had taken from the *Penguin* had long been exhausted, and as there were no tobacco manufactories in Neuroomia, I had to content myself with smoking a kind of bark, that of the Bubu tree, which possessed a flavour somewhat resembling that of the soothing weed. However, I had none with me, and explained this fact to Yondozi, who said it would be useless to look for the tree in the neighbourhood, but that we should meet with it higher up in the mountains; so I had to console myself with this piece of intelligence, then I spread my trappings out on the ground and went to bed, thinking of the supply of good tobacco I had stowed away on board the *Penguin*. Why, there was one unbroken chest that would last me at least two years. I would bring it back with me when returning; yet it was bulky, and I began to think that perhaps I had better leave it till they removed the vessel. Of course the crew knew where it was, but they had plenty without it, and very probably had not meddled with it, unless Septimus had finished his supply,

and became curious, Yes! Septimus was a heavy smoker, and that was his favourite brand. And there was the rum, and a big supply too. Well, perhaps the best thing I could do with it was to present it to the Government—they might esteem it for the museum. If I could only induce Yondozi to swallow a half-pint of it, how it would make him talk geography!

However, I fell asleep without a smoke, and on waking, I cannot say that I felt any the worse. On the contrary, I was in the highest spirits at the idea of a trip over the mountains; my companions also appeared to share my hilarity.

Higher and higher we went, now scaling a steep incline, then descending into a yawning abyss; now we were on our way round a lofty pinnacle, then following the narrow pathway along the edges of fearful chasms. Woods, gorges, mountains, rivers, lakes and torrents kept constantly coming into view and fading again in the distance, or more suddenly lost to the sight by the intervening timber. The scenery, indeed, was like some enchanting panorama.

Higher and higher still, till we came to the brink of a clear mountain lake, out of whose waters the snow-clad peaks appeared to rise, and into

which flowed numberless rivulets, fed by the winter snows.

Here we decided to make our second halt and remain for some time, for there was abundance of fresh green grass for the animals growing along the margin of the lake. As soon as we had fixed on a suitable spot for our camp, I secured from the pack a small axe, from the back of which projected a long spike that could be used for digging. Thus armed to cut away the brushwood, I went in search of the Bubu tree, the bark of which I used for smoking.

I went some distance from the camp, bearing away from the lake, yet could find none, so I stood to consider whether it might not be useless to proceed any farther, and was on the point of returning, when I recognised the foliage of one growing in the valley beneath. I clambered down to it, and found that it grew from the bank of a mountain stream, in a very awkward position, and by no means easy of access. However, by stepping from rock to rock in the water, I managed to reach it, and having collected a supply of the dry bark, filled my pipe, and sat down to have a quiet smoke beneath my favourite tree. I had not, however, liberated many clouds, when something glittering

in the water attracted my attention. I reached down and drew it up; it was a piece of dark-blue looking quartz, and contained gold.

Here was a discovery! There was very probably more about, and I would procure at least a few good "specimens." I took up a handful of sand and examined it: there was plenty of "black jack," and I got the "colour." So I set to work with my axe, turning up the coarse gravel and stones along the edge and in the most likely places for "pockets." My digging operations were, however, soon brought to a close by the spike striking some solid substance that appeared to be softer than stone. I tried it again, and turned up a nugget of pure gold quite heavy enough to carry back to the camp.

On arriving there, I threw down my burden in the middle of the small circle, who were seated on logs and pieces of timber, evidently enjoying their meal.

"Melema," Yondozi quietly remarked, while looking at it, then pointed to a seat on a branch nearly opposite himself. Beyond a smile from one or two, the others did not take the slightest notice of it. I cannot say, however, that I was surprised at this, for from the first I had my misgivings as

to the worth of it here. So I pointed to it, and asked Yondozi if that were plentiful.

"Yes," was the reply.

"It is not one of your valuable metals, then?" I continued.

"No," he replied. "It exists in great abundance, and is easily obtained. You shall meet with rocks of it in these mountains." He went on, "It is also found, and mined on a large scale, near Tehana; indeed, the Tehana mines alone can supply the demand for statues, machinery, ornaments, and the many other purposes for which it is used."

I now chose a piece of the coarse yet wholesome bread and a fresh fish (they had been fishing during my absence), then poured into my vessel a quantity of oclima, a decoction made from the leaves of the oclima tree, and used in Neuroomia as tea. I thought at first that it tasted like Peruvian bark, but, through use, got accustomed to it, and now relished it. Thus armed, I took a seat on the vacant branch. The conversation turned upon metals, when Moro appeared to advantage. I told them that if it were known in the other continents that gold was so plentiful in Neuroomia, there would be a rush of a few millions of people to these parts, if only to perish on the ice.

"Of what use would the gold be to them in that case?" remarked Yondozi.

I replied that there was a large section of our people who would brave any dangers and endure the severest hardships and privations in order to become possessed of the coveted metal.

"And would they be wholly actuated by a spirit of gain?" he inquired.

"In many cases," I answered, "love of adventure alone would be the prime factor, while probably in the majority they would be influenced by a love of gain, adventure, and change."

Moro here remarked that perhaps we might be able to send them the *Penguin* with a full cargo of gold, or melema, as he termed it. "Perhaps," he went on, "one or two of the crew may be anxious to return to the land they left, and in that case he was sure some of their own men would be willing to accompany them, and run the risk of the ice."

Here one of the young men said that he would be willing to go; and, on hearing this, the other also offered his services.

Whereupon I replied that I had already disposed of the ship, and was doubtful if any of the crew were desirous of a repetition of what they had already experienced among the currents and

icebergs. Nevertheless, that gold might induce them to make the attempt.

Yondozi here remarked that although the Government had accepted the vessel, yet he was in a position to say that they would only be too glad to see her leave their shores with a cargo that might be the means of alleviating the distress and ameliorating the condition of some of their fellow-men in other lands. And, further, that the question of getting the *Penguin* to Atazatlan, or any of their large towns, was still problematical.

"Have you fixed on any plan for that purpose?" I inquired.

"Partly," was the answer. "It was my intention to sail her back again to the ice-field, then make appliances for lifting her up out of the water, and afterwards to place her on a sledge and take her to Scalascala by means of machinery, or, if necessary, with the aid of animals. On arriving in the neighbourhood of Scalascala, she could be slid into the Nocalattan Sea and sailed to Atazatlan. In the event of her reaching her destination in a sound condition, he believed it was not the intention of the Government to place her in the museum, but to leave her in the water, and at my disposal."

I told him that the *Penguin* was an excellent vessel, still fit for many years of active service, and that all she required was an overhauling.

We had now finished our meal, and Yondozi suggested that we should go fishing, for he had brought lines and hooks with him (this ingenious method of capturing fish appears to be well known everywhere). I acquiesced, and went to cut a rod for myself.

Still, I thought of the *Penguin*. I liked the idea of leaving her in the water, although I was anxious that the Government should accept something from me as a slight acknowledgment of their many acts of kindness. Yet I never relished the proposal to have her exhibited. Once I got her to Atazatlan, I would be able to use her as a yacht, and give excursions to my friends.

Having prepared our lines, Yondozi and myself went along the lake for a little distance, and then threw them in. We were not there long when he landed a fine-looking fish resembling a perch. I, however, got no bite, so I took up my line and went farther along the bank, till I came to a place that I liked. Here I threw it into the water. Something began to nibble at the bait, so I pulled it up, but there was nothing on. I dropped it

again, and whatever had been at it before appeared to have returned, so I gave it another pull, but no fish. However, I let it down very gently in the same place for the third time, and fully determined to let him "have it." The float began to go under as before, but I took no notice of it for some time, then gave a sudden jerk. Yes, I had him this time, and a heavy fish too. However, I was puzzled, on swinging him into the air, to see that he had four legs and a tail. I dropped him on the ground, and ran towards him. He however did not move till I was pretty near; then he made a spring, quick as lightning, landed on my leg a little below the knee, and buried his claws and teeth deep into my flesh, the hook still sticking in his mouth. I was in the act of endeavouring to pull him off, when Yondozi, who had noticed the affair, came running up. He caught him in a manner that instantly made him relax his hold, then held him up in his hand.

I now had an opportunity of examining the animal. It was about the size of an opossum, and had thick, glossy hair. Yondozi called it a velixit, and said they were prized on account of their fur. Saying this, he took the hook out of his mouth, and flung him back again into the water. Then he

advised me to return to the camp and attend to my leg, as the wounds might prove dangerous.

However, I did not follow his advice, but merely washed them with water; and although they were very painful for a time, they soon healed up.

I shifted again. This time, however, I had better luck, and caught four fine fish in succession. Then I joined my friend, and we returned to the camp.

I was taken up with the beauties of Lake Orania, as it was called, and expressed my wonder to Yondozi that no one had made a residence in such an attractable neighbourhood. He said it was some distance away from the settled parts, and that there were many such lakes in Neuroomia.

We remained in this wild and wonderful locality, fishing and exploring the country, for a space of time equal to a few of our days, then packed the flanillas, now much refreshed by the halt, and resumed our journey. Our path for a time led along the banks of the lake, and as we were leaving it, I turned round and gazed in the direction of its shores till the last patch of still water was lost to view.

Our next camping-place was of a different character, the timber being scanty and of stunted

growth, and we were surrounded by snowy peaks resplendent in their robes of dazzling purity. The vegetation had changed, and the air became much sharper. The sun, however, was warm, and we felt comfortable and vigorous. A small green, grassy flat was chosen for our encampment. Here a fire was lit, and the food prepared.

Thus we travelled on through the mountains, making prolonged halts where we found the grass plentiful; but as the halting-places were often far from each other, we had frequently to make long journeys without stopping. Eventually, however, we got a glimpse of the great icefield, though it was still a long distance off.

We now began to descend, and soon found ourselves in the broken volcanic country at the foot of the chain. We crossed over it, steering for the "Penguin Channel," which I named after the vessel, and Yondozi agreed that it should be known by that name in future. We reached it in due course, and I felt happier at the idea of seeing the *Penguin* again. I knew exactly where she was, by the little hill not a great distance ahead. We did not follow the channel round, as it was curved, but made straight for the hill. I urged my beast forward, and the others followed my example.

We soon began to ascend, and I kept a look-out for the masts. I hurried to the top, but no ship was to be seen—the *Penguin* was gone!

I stood for a time like one confused, gazing up and down the channel. The others noticed my consternation, but doubtless guessing what was the matter, never uttered a word.

I now began to descend in the direction of the camp. On the way Yondozi inquired if I knew where the vessel had gone. I replied in the negative, saying that the whole matter was a mystery to me, and pointed out the tree to which she had been fastened. On arriving there, we dismounted, and, letting the animals go, began to examine the neighbourhood to see if we could find anything that might give a clue as to the cause of her disappearance.

I now began to wonder if Septimus had ever found his way back to the vessel. It was just possible that he did not return, and in that case the others would probably come to the conclusion that we were both dead, and may have taken their departure north. But, again, that was hardly feasible, for without him they would not attempt to navigate the vessel through the ice. But, on the other hand, they might have gone farther inland, to find

a more favourable place to settle down; or perhaps they had taken a trip towards the icefields, and intended to return. At all events, there was evidence to show that the camp had not long been deserted. There were empty preserve tins only recently opened, pieces of paper, cloth, and metal, that had not been long exposed to the weather, and the fireplace had been used lately.

While we were examining these things, I noticed that some trees had been cut down a little distance off, and, in hurrying towards them, stumbled over something; it was an old boot. I knew that boot at once; Septimus wore it when he left me—it told a tale. On reaching the fallen trees, I could see at a glance they had been cut, and recently, too, by Septimús. There was no mistaking those stumps, for I had seen him cut timber in the South Sea Islands on several occasions, and knew his manner of using an axe. Yondozi came over, and I explained matters to him.

It was now a certainty that Septimus had arrived here safely; but where had they gone with the ship? I could see, by the pieces left, that the wood had been cut the proper length for the stoves in the galley, and they had taken a good supply of it.

We began to discuss the situation, and walked leisurely over towards the bank where the *Penguin* had been fastened. On reaching it, I happened to look at the marks the ropes had made on the tree, and read the words, "LOOK UP," cut in the bark on the side facing the channel. Of course I did look up, and, to my surprise, saw my iron chest (water and fire-proof), in which I kept money and important papers, firmly fixed above me in a fork between the branches. Yondozi also noticed it, and was up the tree in a moment. However, he found it to be heavy, and did not like to let it fall. So I got a rope from the pack, and he lowered it to the ground. I had the key in my pocket, and applied it at once. But I found its aid was not required, for the lock had been broken. It contained several articles, principally provisions, and the following letter, enclosed in an envelope, and addressed to me:—

"DEER SOR,—

"Ass we hav wated a reesunibl long tim, and yu hav not cum back her, we ar deturmind to go hom and lev yu. Yu ort to be back befur. Yu nos i niver kard to cum so fur, fur ther his no wals, no sharks, no big fish her, and peepel that go ex-

plorin his payd bi the guvermint. Yu nos purfickly weel the col wither weel son cum and yu wat. The locker is getin lo, bot i lev yu samon in the teens, and shuger, and fresh lins and huks, and te, and tobacko and pips, and machers, and pickel botls in yer one irn chest, so thay wont git hurt or spoyld. I taks churge of the *Penguin* mesilf, fur yu must be ded, and Skinee is furst mat, so ther no, and i hop yu hav gud luk.

"Sind, Captin Septimus Adolphus Robinson, fur himsilf and cru."

What was to be done? They would not be out of the channel yet. Perhaps we might overtake them by hurried marches with the animals.

"What could we do if we did overtake them?" asked Yondozi.

"The crew would obey me," I answered.

"I have a plan of the channel," he said. It winds considerably, and we can take a good many short cuts without any danger of missing them. Perhaps it would be better for you and myself to push on at once with light packs, and leave the others to camp here till we return."

I agreed to this. The two strongest flanillas

were caught, and we lost no time in commencing the pursuit of the *Penguin*.

There was certainly a hope of overtaking them, but it was a very forlorn one, for I knew what the vessel could do, even with a moderate breeze; and besides, they would very probably hurry in order to get through the ice before the end of the summer.

We did not, owing to the broken nature of the country, make the progress that we had anticipated. The timber was not dense, but the ground in many places was full of holes. There was no path, and numerous rocks and stones impeded our march. The animals became footsore, and more sluggish. This enforced us to make more frequent halts. At length, however, we reached the open sea, between the land and the ice, and seeing a high hill on one of the headlands in front, we made for it. On reaching the top, we scanned the horizon, and saw the *Penguin*, but she was some leagues off, and making for a great opening in the icefield. I looked towards Yondozi, but all he remarked was, "We are too late."

The *Penguin* was gone. Even gliding away in the distance she was a beautiful sight. I felt a choking sensation in my throat, and notwithstand-

ing the beauty, attractions, and happiness of Neuroomia, I would have given anything at that moment to be on board the vessel I loved. Yondozi hoisted a flag that he had brought with him for the purpose, but I do not think they noticed it. I examined her through my glass, and recognised Septimus on the bridge, looking in the direction of the ice. Once or twice he turned round, but all I could do was to shake my clenched fist at him. I suggested that we make a fire, but Yondozi said it was not likely that it would attract their attention, owing to the number of active volcanic peaks in the vicinity. However, it was our last resort; so we made a fire and a big smoke too, but they either saw not or heeded not, for the *Penguin* kept on her course.

We let the animals go, to rest and graze on the natural pastures, then we prepared and ate our meal, for we were both tired and hungry.

Meanwhile I questioned Yondozi as to the prospects of the vessel clearing the ice. He said that it was possible she might get through, but the dangers to be encountered were great. First, there was evidence to show that the action of the current was becoming weaker, and if this continued, it would be liable to get frozen over;

but even if they were successful in getting through the channel, great difficulties would be experienced on reaching the outer border of the field, where they would be sure to meet with vast quantities of broken ice. This, however, was the proper time for the venture. The season was in every way favourable for the enterprise, and fortune might favour them.

The flag floated playfully in the breeze, and the smoke travelled far, but the vessel kept getting farther and farther away; so we decided to return, and took our departure, but not before I sadly waved adieu to the *Penguin*.

We went back by easy stages to the camp where we left the others. Here we remained for a time to refresh the animals, and then commenced our return journey to Atazatlan. It proved as interesting and enjoyable as the other, and although I was disappointed in the object of the expedition, yet the trip was a pleasant one, so pleasant, indeed, that on the way I could not refrain from expressing the hope to Yondozi that I would have many similar excursions among the mountains of Neuroomia.

He replied, that would be a very easy matter, for the Government sent out scientific expeditions

every summer to make explorations and surveys, and apart from these there were always several private tourist parties who, during the holiday season, preferred the solitude of the mountain lakes and sea shore to the gaities of Atazatlan and Tehana. He continued, this travelling and camping business was considered to be one of the best and healthiest ways of enjoying life, and a very large section of the people appeared to be aware of the fact.

In Neuroomia, vast as the territory was, there were neither deserts nor great plains resembling those I had described as existing in other parts of the world. Their continent was nearly surrounded by an open sea, from the shores of which rose vast mountain chains that encircled their territory on every side. Of course there were several passes over them, but the only water highway that communicated with the great icefields beyond was the channel leading from the Nocalattan Sea.

With regard to the surface of the country, it might be described as consisting of mountains, hills, forests, undulating tracts, level grassy pastures and cultivated fields, but everywhere well watered by rivers, lakes, and streams.

When we arrived at Atazatlan, we found ban-

quets, balls, picnics and excursions to be the order of this gay time. I explained the situation with reference to the *Penguin* to Onneyubla in a few words. By way of response, he merely expressed a hope that they would have a pleasant voyage, and reach their homes in safety. The ladies made their appearance to welcome us back, and I was glad to see the charming face of Alvarez among them.

I learnt from Onneyubla that preparations were being made by the people of the palace for a monster picnic; that he himself would be present, and that I would there meet many of the acquaintances I had made at the ball.

When I joined Alvarez, I made inquiries of her concerning the gathering. She said they were almost ready, and that it was to be held at the Grove, only a short distance away from the palace. We arranged to walk there together, and I repaired to my rooms to get ready for the occasion.

On the way to the Grove, I related the adventures of our trip. She said that she should have been delighted to have a tour away in the *Penguin* to the distant regions I had visited, but at the same time would like to have the opportunity of again returning.

On arriving at the Grove, I found it to consist of a natural depression or elongated basin, at the bottom of which was a small lake, whose dark-blue waters looked lovely in their stillness. Many little streams tumbled over terraces of rocks of various colours, while the superfluous waters of the valley found an outlet through a narrow and precipitous gorge at the opposite extremity. There were several paths leading along the margin of the lake, and on either side of these grew shrubs and trees.

We were among the first to arrive, and with Alvarez for a companion, I found the Grove to be an exceedingly delightful place. We walked through the woods and along the shores, exploring the many natural ferneries and other sheltered nooks.

"Have you seen any places similar to the Grove in other parts of the world?" she inquired.

"Yes," I said, "there are several such depressions,—the grandest, as far as I know, being the Yosemite Valley in California, which, during certain hours, is hardly less beautiful than this."

"And have you not also seen countries that resemble Neuroomia?" she continued.

"Yes," I replied. "Perhaps the regions, as far as beauty and climate is concerned, that most

closely approach the happy condition of Neuroomia are the South Sea Islands, scattered over a vast portion of the southern part of our great Pacific Ocean."

I here gave her a concise account of these islands, and the life led by the savages who inhabited them.

She said that it sounded more like a legend than reality, and reminded her of the "tradition of the two lovers." I expressed a desire to hear it, and having chosen a seat in a romantic spot, she began :—

"It happened a very long time ago, some time during the past ages, that a boy and girl from different tribes contracted a passion for each other. The girl, who was a daughter of the chief of her tribe, was beautiful, and her father wished to give her in marriage to one of their own people—a man who had been his friend for a long time. The boy was also the son of a chief who was equally averse to the young pair being together. Nevertheless, certain people from both tribes encouraged them, and also assisted them to meet, for they believed that good would come of it, and might in the end lead to the union of the tribes, which they considered to be a desirable object. But there were others again who prophesied that evil would

befall the people, and there was a proverb to the effect that calamities overwhelmed when the sons and daughters of chiefs became wed. The father of the girl, however, became aware of the meetings, and their trysting places were made known to him; so he placed a guard over his daughter, and they were no longer able to meet. But Wawena pined for her lover, so much indeed that her life began to be despaired of. As for Gulpanzi, he was prohibited from hunting in the forest, and made to remain in the camp, which was humiliating to his proud nature. After a time, however, he appeared not to care for anything, and wandered about as if he no longer wished to live.

"Now it happened that in a wild place among the hills there was a certain fountain which had the peculiar property of healing hearts known to be wounded from love; but for this purpose the water had to be drank by the sufferer from the spring, for the moment it was raised, it lost its charm.

"Now it came to pass that those councillors who were in favour of keeping the lovers apart, made the chief, her father, believe that it would be a good thing for Wawena to drink of the fated water, and it was agreed that she should be led to the fountain.

"When, however, she became aware of their intention, she wept bitterly, and said that she would rather die than cease to love, so nothing was done in the matter for a time; but soon after the sun appeared above the mountains and forest, when the latent agency of the water was said to be most potent, and the water itself most bitter, Wawena was forced to the Fountain of Yunalooma, and only freed from the grasp of those who cruelly brought her when near the edge of the water. No one dared to hold or put a hand on her while she drank, for it was believed that evil would overtake him who ventured to do so. Wawena, however, did not drink, but on hearing a cry from Gulpanzi, her lover, darted past her captors in the direction from whence the sound proceeded. Of course she was pursued; but Wawena was fleet of foot, and the lovers escaped. They concealed themselves in the fastnesses of the mountains, but were followed, and they knew that in the end they would be brought back and punished. They had to wander from place to place, and could not remain long even in their favourite haunts, so they sought the wildest parts of the country near the open sea. During the time they were here, a terrible earthquake took place, which they themselves only witnessed.

What they saw or heard no one knows. Moun tain chains were thrown to atoms, and fresh ones made their appearance. To what extent the sea was disturbed is a mystery. The great icefields, however, were broken up, and icebergs thrown high on the dry land. This happened during the period of twilight, and lasted for some time; but the lovers were brave, and formed a bold project—that of leaving Neuroomia.

"So Gulpanzi began to build a boat, in which art the people of those times were well skilled. They both worked hard, and had it completed before the end of the following summer; then they made preparations for a long journey, and took their departure.

"Previous to this there were traditions about other lands existing beyond the ice. These were considered to be extremely fair, but nothing more was known of them, and many even doubted their existence. However, it is very probable that the lovers were influenced by one or more of these traditions. But be that as it may, years passed away, and the ice again became compact, but nothing was heard of the wanderers, and it was believed that they had perished.

"During one very mild summer, however, seals,

and other marine animals, prized for their furs, were numerous on certain parts of the ice, and hunting expeditions frequently left the land to capture them. One of these proceeded far to the north, and reached the edge of the field, where there were many coves and headlands formed by the ice. Here myriads of sea-birds made their home, and were easily captured by the hunters, who made a camp, and remained for some time in order to collect a quantity of eggs and feathers. They saw the great mountains of ice break off from the field, and leave their ancient home for the north.

"While watching the interesting progress of one of these wanderers of the deep, they noticed a piece of wood drifting towards them. This was a very unusual occurrence, and centred their attention. Nearer and nearer it came over the playful waves, till at length it could be reached by one of their long spears. On taking it up, they found that it had been cut from a tree which was strange to the forests of Neuroomia, and, more wonderful than this, the emblems of the tribe of Gulpanzi were carved on either side. They suspected it to be hollow, and as it was partly decayed, one blow on the ice sufficed to send it to pieces, when a limpy substance, resembling a fold of bark, dropped from

it. On this were inscribed certain characters in the Neuroomian tongue, which they easily deciphered. (I should, however, have mentioned that the art of communicating with one another by written characters was known to the tribes of Neuroomia from a very early period, and is said to have been taught them by the loved Molopozi.) But to resume. The writing was done by the hand of Gulpanzi, and gave an account of the wanderings of Wawena and himself.

"After leaving Neuroomia, they experienced no serious trouble from the ice, which they left far behind, and found themselves in a great open sea—how great, it was, indeed, impossible to tell, but quite free from ice. They, however, wandered on, and passed many regions that were beautiful. Sometimes they landed, but left again, as these lands were inhabited by a people whose skins were black, and who killed each other.

"On, on they wandered, till they found a region without any people, where the sun kept constantly rising out of, and setting again in, the water. This land was beautiful and fruitful, so they loved it, and left it not, but made it their home, and were very happy."

"Have they preserved this MS.?" I inquired.

"It crumbled to pieces in their hands, and before they had finished reading it."

"But no doubt they preserved the wood," I remarked.

"No one knows what became of the wood," was the reply; "and at the present time," she continued, "there is no material object left in support of the tradition."

The people were now arriving in throngs, and among them I noticed President Onneyubla gaily chatting with a young lady who walked by his side.

"Does he mean anything serious?" I inquired. "Or, in other words, does he mean to marry the young lady?"

"No!" was the answer. Then she laughingly continued, "Marriage with us is not considered a serious matter. However," she went on, "it is well known that Onneyubla will never marry, and though he seldom remains long in the company of one, yet he is a great favourite with the ladies."

"Then he is fickle," I observed.

"Not necessarily," was the reply. "Onneyubla loved once, many summers gone, but his affianced died from a fall received in the Yackla Mountains, and he never loved another."

Here I met many acquaintances, including Van-

dalia and Yeyema. From the latter I accepted an invitation to return with them to Tehana, in order to join a great excursion in one of their floating villages to the icefields and the city of Scalascala. Alvarez and Vandalia having got into conversation, Yeyema and myself took leave of them for a time, and walked among the people. I met nearty all the ladies whose acquaintance I had made at the ball, and also many fresh ones. The people were still arriving, refreshments were partaken of, and many games introduced, in which this cheerful and happy people, old and young, joined with the enthusiasm of children.

I again sought out Alvarez, and we left the dreamy Pendalozzi Valley for the palace before the masses began to depart, and while the games and other amusements were still at their height; for, notwithstanding the gaiety of the throng, I enjoyed myself more alone with Alvarez than with the many.

On our way I inquired if there were no plotting or scheming over love matters in Neuroomia.

"Lovers are perfectly free to think out their own affairs, and what course in life they intend to pursue," was the reply. "You surely do not think that any one else would interfere with them?"

"No," I observed. "But when young ladies are in love, do they not sometimes have rivals?"

"Yes, and young men too," was the ready retort.

"And the men always manage to settle their differences in an amicable manner," I remarked.

"We shall take the case of a man," she said, "who is sufficiently fortunate or unfortunate to have rivals. Then the problem as to whom she will choose is for the young lady to solve, and when she has made her choice, there is an end of the matter, but in most cases the rivals themselves can, with little difficulty, see who is the favourite, and the unfortunate ones, or otherwise, as the case may be, are sufficiently thoughtful not to seek the company of the young lady any longer."

On arriving at the palace, she inquired if I loved music. I answered in the affirmative, and then she suggested that we should go to the music room. On entering it, I was so impressed with the gorgeous style of decoration that I expressed my surprise to Alvarez.

She said that this was considered, and was from the first intended to be, the finest room in the palace.

There appeared to be an endless variety of

stringed and wind instruments. Of course I examined them; but as my musical education never got beyond being able to play a few tunes on the concertina, I had to be content to listen to the playing of Alvarez. At first I cannot say that I felt very much interested. However, she had not gone far when I became enraptured. She also sang many songs, mostly of legendary character, and I enjoyed these even more than the music, for I loved to listen to her voice.

During one of the intervals she asked me to sing a song, but at this time I had consigned none of the Neuroomian songs to memory, so I entertained her with a comic in my own language, which of course she did not understand. So the happy hours flew by until Onneyubla and his friends returned, when a large crowd assembled in the great dining-hall, for the meal taken previous to retiring.

I again sat beside Alvarez, while Onneyubla, with his cheerful manner and kind face, as usual occupied a seat at the head of the table. The conversation was chiefly upon future gatherings and excursions, and I learned that Alvarez was to be among the number going to Scalascala.

I was glad of this, but more glad to think that I had no rival, for as yet I saw none besides myself

paying particular attention to her, and I wondered that the company of such a beautiful girl was not more sought after.

On leaving the dining-hall, we repaired to the music room, where I had the pleasure of hearing several of the ladies playing, while a number of, the men and ladies as well, entertained us by their singing. To me the songs were doubly interesting, for they offered a key to the literature of the country, which henceforward I decided to study.

After they had dispersed, I went to my bedroom, with a view to have a sound sleep, in order to be refreshed for the trip to the icefields. I cannot say, however, that I enjoyed much rest on this occasion, for many things crowded upon my imagination.

In the first place, many of my plans were in a measure baffled through the perfidy of Septimus Robinson, and yet he managed to elude punishment. I turned on one side and thought of Alvarez, then on the other and thought of Vandalia. Then again there was that "Tradition of the Two Lovers." I wondered if they ever existed, and if so, on what uninhabited land they made their home. Undoubtedly an island, but what island? Probably New Zealand, or one of the South Sea Islands,

but the inhabitants of these islands were copper-coloured. Not all,—some were black.

Now here was a nice point to determine. The Neuroomians were white, and the inhabitants of some of the South Sea Islands were black, while those of New Zealand, and some of the islands mentioned, might be said to be a swarthy brown, a kind of compromise between the two colours. The lovers very probably had children, and was it not possible they might have intermarried with the black inhabitants of the neighbouring islands, and so have produced the Maori and other allied races? But when did the migration of the lovers take place? That would have to remain for ever with the unknown. Were there any uninhabited islands at the time? Yes, it was quite possible there were.

These matters and other problems connected with them occupied my thoughts till I became quite exhausted, and fell asleep. On waking, I felt feverish and not at all well, and for the first time since my arrival in this continent, I felt a longing for a "Cocktail" or "Pick-me-up"; but as these stimulants (at least, as beverages) were unknown in Neuroomia, I had to live down the desire. Perhaps later on I would be able to educate them in mys-

teries of manufacturing and mixing alcoholic drinks, for in this respect, notwithstanding all their knowledge, we had gained a march on them.

However, I got up, threw the heavy curtains aside, and opened the windows. The bright crimson sunbeams streamed into the room, which had now a more cheerful appearance. I knew that I should feel better after a constitutional, so I went outside.

Yes, it was glorious outside, and everything was still and quiet about the palace. I paused for a moment as to where I should go, but turned, as if influenced by some sudden impulse, in the direction of the romantic stream where I first walked with Alvarez.

I went along in a meditative mood, with my head bent down, till I approached the current, then unconsciously stood perfectly still, wholly oblivious to the surroundings, and should probably never have been aware of this fact, were it not that my thoughts were startled out of their channel by the sound of a musical voice close by. On looking up, I saw the beautiful form of Alvarez, seated on the leaning trunk of a tree near the edge of the water, with an open volume in her lap. My first impulse was to clasp her to my bosom, but she looked at

me with such a mischievous twinkle of merriment in her laughing eyes, as if I deserved to be ridiculed for entertaining such an absurd idea even for a moment, that I felt quite disarmed, and, I confess, a little embarrassed.

"You must have some weighty subjects occupying your mind," she said. "Why, you looked the picture of a philosopher coming down the slope, and the condition became you so admirably, that at first I thought it would be a serious wrong to break in on your soliloquy. However, I watched you till I became impatient; so I hope that you will pardon me, for I gave you what I considered to be a reasonable time to thresh the matter out."

"Nothing more weighty than that tradition you told me at the gathering in that charming valley recently," I answered. "I have been puzzling my brains over the fate of the descendants of the renegade lovers, and have been wondering if it were possible they might be identical with a race of people I have met, and whose early history is completely shrouded in the obscure clouds of mystery."

"I must tell you no more traditions," she said, "if they worry you so much. Why, you look quite fatigued."

"I do not feel quite as fresh as usual," I replied. "However, I am glad you related the tradition, for it gives me food for reflection. However, it is an agreeable surprise to find you here, and you do not appear to be the least lonely."

"No! certainly not. Why should I?" she observed. "I have my own thoughts to keep me company. Of course they may not be quite so absorbing as yours, but still I feel happy."

"That," I said, "is the result of having latent happiness within yourself."

"That I do not know," was the simple reply; "but I think if I did not possess it naturally, that it could be acquired from such agreeable surroundings, for instance, from the mountains, trees, and streams. I have ever found them interesting companions."

"I acknowledge," I said, "that variety in the physical features of the vicinity, together with its animals and birds, have on more than one occasion added lustre to, and prolonged, my moments of gladness; but what impressed me more deeply was that mute Nature appeared to sympathize with me in my distress, and in such a soothing manner as to relieve me, in a measure, of my burden."

"That she will do in the end," responded Al-

varez, somewhat sadly. "You have known sadness, then?" she continued.

"Yes," I answered; "and I can safely say that there are few individuals of the nations, great and small (at least, the civilized ones), in the other parts of the world, who, attaining anything approaching a ripe age, have not experienced hours, nay, even days, of bitterness of soul."

"To what is this unfortunate condition of affairs to be ascribed?" she asked.

"In some of the warm countries of the world," I answered, "the enervating effect of climate on the human body is of itself sufficient to produce a feeling of melancholy. But to this in many instances must be added fixed residence in low-lying level tracts, where the conditions of life are as monotonous as the surface of the country; and worse than all, in our large cities, tens of thousands of human beings have such limited spaces for their homes, which are often situated in extremely unhealthy localities, that disease is fostered and life shortened."

"You are fast annihilating my dreams of other lands," she interjected.

"On the other hand," I said, "there are regions where the people, surrounded by the abundant gifts of Nature, have ease, comfort, and enjoyment.

But you have been reading, and perhaps that book is more interesting than my interruption."

"No!" was the quick answer. "Although I come often, I seldom read much here."

I now took a seat beside her, in order to have a look over the volume. She handed it to me, and I read on the cover: "The Career of the Lovers of Yacla."

"I presume it is a work of fiction," I said.

"No; a biography," was the reply. "Yet there are many chapters that indeed resemble fiction," she continued. "I suppose there are many romantic works of fiction in your language."

"Yes," I said; "but the great bulk of them at the present time treat of courtships and unhappy marriages, contracted from interested motives apart from love, such as wealth and social position,—indeed, where love was only a secondary consideration, if it existed at all; also of disputes about money matters, intrigues, and law-suits over the property of heirs and heiresses. Nevertheless, it has become a very important, if not the most important, department of our literature, a literature of which any country might be justly proud."

"Is not the hour fixed for our departure from Atazatlan approaching?" she asked.

"Yes," I said; "and perhaps we had better return." Whereupon we made a start for the palace. On the way back I felt quite well, and in my usual spirits.

"Is this the first trip of the season?" I inquired.

"No," she answered. "The first excursion to Scalascala took place during the time you were absent on the *Penguin* expedition."

"Yes," I said; "I remember now hearing of it before leaving Tehana. What is the name of the floating village, again? I cannot think of it now."

"The *Dorondoro*," she answered; "the same as we leave by. This is her second trip. I was on her the first time. It was quite enjoyable, though we did not venture out as far as the icefields. However, on this occasion, I believe that it is intended to make a longer stay."

"I suppose," I remarked carelessly, "that you added considerably to the happiness of some one else during the last trip."

"I don't know," was the frank reply, and she looked at me in a very innocent manner with her beautiful dark eyes.

I now felt the remark was untimely on my part.

"They all appeared to enjoy themselves on the *Dorondoro*," she continued, after a pause.

"Was there much love-making?" I inquired.

"Yes," she answered, "there were many happy pairs, a number of whom, it is expected, will be happier in the near future, for this is the lovers' season, when probably more than two-thirds of the engagements of the year take place. It is during this period," she went on, "that the men turn themselves into notes of interrogation."

"And the ladies into notes of exclamation," I interjected.

"Not always in the affirmative," she observed.

"And when do they enter on the happier period?" I inquired.

"Generally during the falls of the following summer," was the reply.

"Then I may look forward to the pleasure of seeing a number of newly married couples on the excursion?" I observed.

"I don't think that you will meet any," was the answer. "They prefer the loneliness of the mountains and lakes to the company of excursionists."

"But should a young lady during the period of engagement meet with a man whom she could love better than her intended husband, how would she act in the matter?" I asked.

"Just as she pleased," was the ready response.

"However," she continued, "if, on the other hand, a man should happen to love another better than his affianced, it is considered that he would not be justified in marrying the latter; but she invariably receives a full confession and explanation from her fickle lover, whose infirmity the lady is implored to overlook. However, they manage to arrange matters between themselves, and in the end part, knowing that it is the best course." She went on, "Cases of the kind we have been discussing, however are, fortunately, exceptionally rare, and this breaking-off engagement business is looked upon with disfavour, as it implies a want of steadfastness of purpose in the party at fault that is not calculated to inspire future confidence."

We were now approaching the palace, and Alvarez left me, going in the direction of her own quarters.

I met Yeyema in the grounds, and he informed me that they would soon be ready; so I hurried to my rooms, and having fitted up myself in holiday fashion, went into the garden, where I met Onneyubbla, when we walked into the dining-hall together. In reply to my question, he said that he was not going to the icefields on this occasion, but would probably go next trip.

Having dined, we ascended the large conveyance, which, when we all took our seats, had quite a family-like as well as a holiday appearance. Among my acquaintances, besides Vandalia and Yeyema, were Folbrizzio, Alvarez (seated by myself), Elmia, Yondozi, and Moro. We drove through Atazatlan in the direction of the wharf for the Tehana vessels, and on arriving there, found one of the fast boats in waiting; so we lost no time in getting on board. The trip in this part of the Nocalattan Sea was indeed pleasant, and I think that I enjoyed it even more than on the last occasion I traversed it. Yondozi and Vandalia were together during the whole time; but as he himself had previously informed me, when we were together on the *Penguin* expedition, that he always intended to remain in a state of single blessedness, I did not give the matter much consideration.

On arriving at Tehana, we did not land, but stepped on board the *Dorondoro*, which was in readiness, and waiting for this her last complement of passengers. She had a very imposing appearance, with her three decks, gracefully hanging boats, snug houses, and swarms of people. Indeed, at first I was doubtful if this huge mass could be made to move, but was soon to be convinced, for

shortly after we got on board, I heard the measured sounds of a gong or bell, and the *Dorondoro* moved slowly away from the wharf and out into the open sea.

On looking round among the passengers, I cannot say that I felt consoled, for standing not a great distance off was Estas. She was in conversation with a lady whom I did not know, and did not appear to notice me, and I felt very glad of it. I had now, in company with Alvarez, an opportunity of looking over the enormous mass of timber known as the *Dorondoro*. She was built in the form of a punt; her three decks, enclosed at the sides by the hanging boats only, were perfectly level. The first, which was not far removed from the surface of the water, resembled a floating garden. It was laid out with promenades, between which were rows of pot plants, shrubs, and even trees. Near the sides were partially enclosed nooks, where moss, ferns, and trees grew among rocks and pebbles, while several fountains, supplied by water distilled from the brine, constantly poured their light showers over them. On the second deck were placed the large dining hall and other rooms. Between the tables of the former were raised benches of staircase form, on which were

tiers of growing flowers and pot plants of smaller size. Beyond the rooms were several rows of seats, and also open spaces, for the convenience of the people; while beyond these again were numerous stalls, where provisions, fruits, books and other articles were exhibited for sale. The bedrooms and lavatories were on the uppermost deck, above which rose several domes. These latter gave the *Dorondoro* a city-like appearance.

After visiting the upper portions of this wonderful structure, we returned to the lower deck, where dancing had already commenced. Alvarez and myself joined in. Estas was also in the dance, with a very modest-looking young man named Hitomlik for a partner. She had been engaged to him for some time, and Alvarez wondered they were here, as she expected that they would be married this season. I thought there was something peculiar about Hitomlik's manner, which nevertheless was agreeable. He appeared to be absent-minded and sad, so I inquired of my companion if ever he had had a long illness.

"No," was the answer; "but on one occasion he had to be confined for a time on the island of Candilia, as he suffered from mental weakness, the result of an accident. However," she continued,

"he is now perfectly cured, as has been proved by more than one physician: otherwise he would not be eligible for marriage."

When the dance was over we were joined by Vandalia and Yondozi, so we sat down together. We did not take part in the next, neither did Estas. However, I noticed that Hitomlik was dancing with another young lady,—younger, indeed, and much handsomer than his former partner. After some time we took part in another dance, in which were Hitomlik and the young lady; but I saw nothing of Estas. When I next saw her, she and Hitomlik were standing close to each other, beside one of the sheltered nooks, and on the very edge of the lower deck. I glanced at the situation, and was just thinking that I should not care to be in that position with Estas, when I saw her deliberately give him a slight push with her elbow, which caused him to lose his balance and fall into the water. I believe that I called out, and rushing towards, him jumped in in an instant. I soon, however, discovered that there was no occasion for this act, for he swam like an octopus, as indeed every Neuroomian can swim. The *Dorondoro* was stopped, and we again got on board, after experiencing nothing worse than a good ducking.

There were very few people near when he fell in, and every one took it for granted that the occurrence was purely accidental. We, of course, both retired to change our clothing, and during this time he began to explain the matter. I inquired if he thought she pushed him in by accident or design?

He answered that it was impossible for him to say, but that she appeared to be annoyed at the time. They had been engaged for about a year, but at the commencement of this summer he met Merindi, the young lady with whom he danced latterly, and got to love her better than Estas. (I was not surprised.) This caused him some worry. However, he thought it was better to apprise Estas, and explain the matter fully to her, as was the custom of the country. It was during this explanation that the accident took place. "Even if it were intentional," he continued, "he did not consider it to be a very serious matter, as she would know that the greatest injury she could inflict upon him by the act would be a sudden plunge-bath, and, after all, perhaps it was only what he deserved."

After dressing, we returned to the lower deck, where Hitomlik joined Merindi. I, however, saw

nothing of Alvarez, and began to walk along the promenade, in the hope of meeting her. During this time I also missed Vandalia, and was wondering where they had gone, when I met Yeyema, and got into conversation with him about various matters. After some time had elapsed, we repaired to the middle deck for refreshments. Having patronised one of the stalls, we sat down, but I could see nothing of Alvarez on this deck. I did not question Yeyema as to their whereabouts, thinking that he very probably would not know.

However, I noticed that there was a good crowd of people some distance ahead of us, but could not see those who were sitting in front, as some were standing. I looked for some time in that direction; still, there was no sign of the ladies putting in an appearance, so I suggested to Yeyema that we go "ahead," and we walked towards the crowd. I went sufficiently far to the front to get a view of the whole, and felt satisfied that she was not among them; indeed, we were on the point of returning, when I happened to turn half round and look to the left. There I saw a sight that chilled me, and yet I had to endeavour to conceal all signs of emotion, as I did not wish to expose my weakness

to Yeyema. Of course I would tell him of it later on, for in him I had found a true friend; but now I was agitated. There, seated beneath us, in one of the many partially enclosed crannies, was Alvarez, and in earnest conversation with a very handsome young man, whom I had not met before.

If she happened to look up, she could see us, and this made me all the more anxious to look as if I were not the least concerned. I gazed at the pair for a moment, then, without looking towards Yeyema, began to walk in the opposite direction. We had not gone far, however, when Vandalia, who was alone, joined us. This was indeed a relief, and we went to the lower deck, where a dance was about to be commenced. I asked Vandalia if she would become my partner. She consented, and we took our places. I endeavoured to be cheerful, but still I felt mortified, and was wondering if I should have to forget, when Alvarez and her sprightly companion tripped past us, and took their places in the dance. This was unbearable, and I wished the performance was over, in order to get away somewhere, feeling that I cared very little where. The music, however, commenced, and we commenced to dance with it. Although my partner knew the dance thoroughly,

and I was under the impression that I knew it myself, still I made several blunders. However, it began to occupy my thoughts, and I got on better towards the end. When it was over, I suggested a seat on the middle deck. She agreed, and we repaired thither.

On the way I began to think of Vandalia, this strange and beautiful girl, who had never yet caused me a pang, who never took the slightest notice of me keeping the company of other young ladies, and who frankly confessed that she would love none. Surely there must be something superior in her nature! Did I meet any one like her in Neuroomia? I could only answer this question in the negative. I had met several equal to her in beauty, but none of such a sweet disposition. And why was this so? Ah, she had known distress, and had herself tasted the pangs of bitterness and despair, which the other girls with whom I was acquainted had not experienced.

We chose a seat in the far front, where we could get a good view of the sea and islands that we passed.

The cold, fresh breezes from the icy expanse played through her flaxen tresses, and she looked beautiful in her sadness.

I now felt more consoled, though still uncomfortable enough.

"This is a lovely trip!" she remarked. "I always enjoy it so much."

"There appear to be many on board who do so," I observed.

"Yes," she answered; "the proportion of sad ones is indeed very small."

"Alvarez seems to be exceptionally happy," I remarked. "Did you notice her in the dance?"

"Yes," she said meditatively; "I think she is always happy, and why should she not be so?" she continued. "Time will pass just the same if she were otherwise."

"Are you acquainted with her companion?" I inquired.

"Yes," was the reply. "His name is Omalonzi, and he is well known in Atazatlan. They have been acquainted since they were children."

"Do you think she loves him?" I asked.

"No; not with a view to matrimony," she said. "That she likes him I have no doubt, and very probably he has a regard for her; but still they are not lovers."

"They are not engaged, then?" I observed.

"No," was the answer. "Alvarez is, as yet, engaged to none."

This was joyous news for me. "She is a charming girl," I said, "and if I do not see less of her in the future, I am afraid that I may learn to love her."

This confession brought a smile to Vandalia's face. "Alvarez has been loved on more than one occasion," she responded, "but hitherto has always turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of her suitors. She is a strange girl," she continued: "happy in her way, yet inclined to be somewhat dissatisfied with existing conditions, and yearning for that which cannot be. Yet," she went on, "she is noble in her aspirations, amiable in sentiment, and of a loving disposition. When, however, she does love, it will be with an intensity characteristic of her ardent nature."

"It is such women as she," I observed, "that become famous with us, for she possesses sufficient intellect to carry her beyond the ordinary groove of everyday life, of which, by the way, the masses become thoroughly wearied; and, apart altogether from her personal charms, there is a kind of magnetism in her manner, and pointedness in her conversation, that would be certain to seduce attention."

"You attribute, then," she said, "what you are

pleased to term our superior state of happiness, to the more varied conditions that attend our existence?"

"Yes; but only in a measure," I answered. "Still, the people here do not labour in the one channel during their whole lives, as many do with us. However, we are approaching the ice," I remarked, for I could perceive the broken outline of the field stretching along the clear horizon.

"Yes," she said, "we shall soon come to a halt."

"And where is Scalascala?" I inquired.

"Some distance behind us now," was the answer. "We passed the channel leading to it some time before we left the Nocalattan Sea. However," she continued, "I understand that we shall call and stay there some time on our return; but, for the present, the *Dorondoro* will anchor near the field, in order that the people may land in the boats. You see they are already examining the fixings."

All amusements were now quitted, and the passengers began to crowd ahead, all eagerly gazing on the cold yet sublime scene in front. So we left our seat, and I met Yondozi, who presented me with a pair of skates.

The *Dorondoro* was now proceeding only at half-

speed; meanwhile, preparations were being made for landing. At last she stopped near the compact field, and anchored. Then the boats were lowered, filled with ladies who desired to reach the ice for skating or other amusement, and by the time they made a few trips, there were not many of the weaker sex on board.

The men now entered the boats, and I was among the first lot, in company with Yeyema, Moro, Hitomlik, and Yondozi. We could see the proceedings on the ice: thousands of ladies, where a few minutes before was but a solitary waste, were travelling in every direction at lightning speed, while others amused themselves by playing various games.

Immediately we landed, I put on my skates, for I was anxious to have a dash on the ice. I was among the first ready; however, we waited till a number were prepared, and then we set off for a race. I happened to get the start, and was leading, and, indeed, likely to keep that position, when I met with an accident. It appears that a lady, whom I did not notice till too late, was coming in a direction at right angles to my course, and as she was passing, bumped her body against my outstretched head. This caused me to swerve and fall heavily on my back. A glance in the

direction of the lady, as I was falling, revealed the retreating figure of Estas, and, of course, I uttered a short marine prayer for her. I was stunned for a time, but soon regained consciousness, and did not follow the advice of my companions—to return to the *Dorondoro* for treatment. However, my body was so stiff and sore from the effects of the fall, that further skating, for a time at least, was out of the question; indeed, it was only just before we left that I was able to indulge in the luxury of a few races with the young ladies.

During our stay the boats kept constantly plying between the vessel and the ice. This enabled the excursionists to leave and return whenever they felt disposed. When sufficient time had elapsed for them to acquire an appetite from the skating and many other exercises, preparations were made for a monster picnic. Fuel and stoves were brought from the ship, and a huge camp was formed; then fires were lit, and when this was accomplished, many curling, winding wreaths of smoke might be seen slowly and dreamily ascending from the ice, which presented an imposing spectacle. Stretching as far as the eye could reach was the level expanse, dotted here and there with moving figures, some of them so small as to be almost imperceptible in the

distance. Towards the north it was ice, ice everywhere, till it reached the sky along the blue horizon. Nor was it cold, for the sun was not obscured by clouds; yet we suffered no inconvenience from its oblique rays.

During this time I saw Alvarez only on one or two occasions, when she came to inquire concerning the extent of the injuries I had received from the ice. On learning, however, that nothing serious had taken place, she again raced off on her skates in company with Omalonzi.

After remaining on the ice for a period equal to three or four of our days, the anchor was raised, and the *Dorondoro* turned slowly round and headed in the direction of the Nocalattan Sea, on her way to Scalascala.

We were now indeed a merry host, and the adventures on the icefield were discussed with animation. Of course there were a few, like myself, who felt inconvenience from the effects of placing their bodies in rather close proximity to the frozen waste. No limbs, however, were broken, and it was expected that those who were hurt would be well again before we reached our next rendezvous.

Soon after getting on board, we all sat down to a hearty meal, which I believed every one enjoyed

thoroughly. Shortly afterwards all was tranquillity, and the *Dorondoro* proceeded as before, but with a sleeping cargo.

On waking, I felt my joints exceptionally stiff, and little inclined to get up; so I laid in bed and began to meditate. Alvarez was uppermost in my thoughts. Perhaps, after all, I had allowed myself to be too much worried over seeing her with, and apparently attached to, Omalonzi, and should not have avoided her; besides, had she not a perfect right to keep company with whomsoever she pleased. I could now plainly see that I had used bad judgment in this matter, and would endeavour to make amends before it was too late. Yes, I would seek out Alvarez, and try, at least, to be as friendly with her as before; and with regard to Omalonzi—well, perhaps it would be as well to take no notice of him.

I now heard a tapping at my door, and called out, "Come in," whereupon it opened slowly, and Yondozi made his appearance.

He said that he had looked in to see if I were unwell, as he had been wondering why I was not up.

"Are the others up?" I inquired.

Yes, the others had been up for some time, and

the meal was nearly ready; however, that would make no difference, he said, as I could get whatever I required at any time.

But the mention of it did make a difference to me, for I now felt hungry, and was up in a moment. My friend waited for me, and we both repaired to the middle deck, and took a seat at one of the tables.

As we approached, a small dark-eyed girl was quitting her seat. Yondozi spoke to her, and introduced me. Her name was Delemia, and I learnt from my friend that she was an actress, also a talented musician, and one of the best singers in the country. She belonged to Tehana, and had acted at the Wameroo Theatre already this season.

I felt much interest in my new acquaintance; indeed, hers was a face not to be easily forgotten. I inquired if there was any prospect of hearing her sing.

"Yes," he said. "She has gone towards the drawing-room, and is very probably playing there at the present time."

Having finished our meal, we walked into the drawing-room, where there were a number of ladies and some members of the sterner sex as well.

Delemia was not playing, however, but reclining on a couch, with a book in her hand.

Yondozi went and spoke a few words to her, whereupon she advanced to a stringed instrument resembling a piano, only much larger, and played several tunes, all of which were foreign to me. Nevertheless, I enjoyed the music, and felt that Yondozi was right in his opinion. She sang a song, only one, but I shall never forget it—never forget the sweetness of that apparently sad voice. It dwells in my memory like a soft yet brilliant star, whose halo shall neither be extinguished nor dimmed by time. After she had ended, she sat still for a while, but no one asked her to sing another, and all were silent.

Seeing this, I thought it only right that I should act the gallant, so I led her back to her former seat, then joining Yondozi, we descended to the lower deck, for I was anxious to have a smoke. We went astern, and having filled and lit my pipe, addressed my friend.

"Come now, old boy," I said (he was nearly twice as old as myself), "did not that singing set you thinking about changing your views on matrimony? Picture to yourself how charming it would be to have the possessor of that voice with you in

a mountain home near one of those dreamy lakes. It makes me poetical to think of it."

"Delemia is a noble as well as an attractive girl," he answered; "but though of an extremely romantic disposition, she has been accustomed to society, and I am inclined to the belief that the stage would be more congenial to her active imagination than a secluded home among the mountains; and, further, if it were otherwise, I am doubtful if she would care to share the enjoyments and drawbacks attending a rural life with me."

"Suppose you try to persuade her," I said.

"I have not changed my views concerning matrimony, and there is therefore no occasion," was the reply.

"Do you not think," I said, "that you would be happier with one of the fascinating girls of Neuroomia for a mate, than by permanently remaining in your present state?"

"Possibly," was the answer; "but in order to realize the felicity of that state, it would be necessary for me to forego enjoyments to which I have grown accustomed. Indeed, it would appear," he continued, "that one happiness is obtained only by the forfeiture of another; therefore, if weighed in the balance, it is questionable which would prove

the more ponderous: that which I should be compelled to relinquish, or that which a change in my state may possibly bring into existence."

"In Neuroomia," I replied, "where there is no danger of experiencing the discomforts and annoyances arising from poverty, and where existence is surrounded by conditions in the highest degree a vourable, I fail to see how or why it would be incumbent on a man taking a partner for life to make any serious sacrifices."

"I was not speaking generally," he said, "but as regards my own individual case. Concerning marriage," he continued, "I have thought over the matter, and hold that, notwithstanding whatever has been said against it as an institution, and whatever its drawbacks might be, that to me the wedded state appears the most natural and noble for all. As for myself, perhaps I should have taken a partner, but then I should have taken one before I reached the meridian of life."

"You are not an old man yet," I interjected.

"No," was the answer; "it is not age so much as the groove I have got into that now forms the barrier. For the last fifty years I followed a roving life, and led an expedition to the mountains every summer, frequently remaining away from

civilization during the whole time the sun was shining. Then, during the opposite half of the year, I led a secluded life, meditating over what I had seen, and writing books. Now if I changed my condition, in the first instance, I should have to abandon going on these expeditions; but I have got to love them, to love living alone and away from the haunts of men, surrounded only by Nature, and listening to her whisperings, and again, during the period of twilight, I could not expect to devote the amount of time to literary work that I do at present."

"Might not your wife be induced to take an interest in many things that interest you?" I observed.

"Yes," was the answer, "quite probably; but I consider that it would be selfish to anticipate it. "We shall take a case in point," he continued, "and assume that I am about to marry Delemia. What right have I to expect that she should become reconciled to my mode of life, any more than I to the stage?" He went on, "I think it would be selfishness on my part to arrive at a foregone conclusion concerning her profession, or any enjoyments that she has known. No, I would rather remain in my present state, than be the means of

withdrawing one iota of the pleasures of existence from the life of another; but here is the object of our discussion approaching, and I shall leave you to form a closer acquaintance with her, and see that you do not become sentimental, for she has charms to please."

Saying this, he walked towards Moro, who was only a little distance off.

True enough, Delemia herself was near, and would have passed me by, were it not that I happened to look towards her and give a glance of recognition. She paused for a moment, but I was already on my feet, and after we had spoken a few words, proposed the middle deck as a better place for obtaining a good view of sea and land, for the *Dorondoro* was majestically moving near the shore, while headland, cove, and island were slowly following one another to the rear.

"I suppose," I observed, "that we are drawing near Scalascala?"

"Yes," she said, and continued, in her musical voice, "I have not been here before, but have just been told that we are already in the channel, and will soon be in the harbour, and within sight of the city. I understand that you like Neuroomia," she continued.

"Yes," I replied, "and more than all her handsome girls."

"In that case," she said, "you should specially enjoy this trip, for I believe there are many beautiful young ladies in Scalascala; but you surely have not yet forgotten the maids of other lands, whom we pictured in imagination to be so fair!"

"No," I answered, "but I fear that they have long forgotten me, and doubtless ere now look upon me as being no more."

"Sad thoughts to entertain," she said musingly; then, looking ahead, suddenly exclaimed: "See! there are the wooden towers of Scalascala."

Yes, I could see them plain enough; but my attention was now drawn in other directions, for we were entering a picturesque little harbour, which I began meditatively to compare with the bay at Atazatlan, when my sweet companion broke in,—

"I have long been looking forward to this excursion. What a lovely sight! There is much to be seen here, for Orangala is frequently known as the 'country of wonders.'"

We could now obtain a good view of the city itself, which was built on a tableland some distance above the sea. Although we were approaching the wharf, on which there was a very large concourse

of people waving green boughs, yet there was not the least bustle or excitement, nor was this attributable to indifference on the part of the passengers, for the expression of gladness in every countenance showed how much they were interested.

On reaching the wharf, an aged yet vigorous-looking little man stepped on board, went up to Yeyema, and addressed him, saying "that on behalf of the people he came to welcome himself and the excursionists to Scalascala." This happened on the lower deck, so I went down, Delemia in the meantime going away to prepare for landing.

I met Yeyema at the foot of the staircase, and he introduced me to Golonzola, Governor of Scalascala and the State of Orangala, then stepped ashore to meet his wife, who had been having a prolonged stay here with her own people.

I found the Governor an interesting personage. His trimmed hair and beard were quite white, yet he moved about with the sprightliness of a lad. He spoke quickly, in short sentences, and at times with a kind of restrained abruptness, that indicated his nervous temperament. He invited me to become his guest, and made a few inquiries about the land from which I sailed, then went off among the passengers, with whom he conversed freely.

I now went ashore to take leave of Yeyema, and saw Vandalia, who introduced me to her mother, Ilimbi, whom I met for the first time. She was a blonde, and much resembled her daughter.

A large number of the passengers made the *Doroondoro* their home during their stay; but many others, among whom were Vandalia, Yeyema, Delemia, and Yondozi, went to live with their friends in the city or country.

The people were parting, yet the parting was only to be of a temporary character, for it was understood that many would meet again before we left, and such was the case.

After leaving the wharf, we drove through the city, which I found to differ in design from Atazatlan and Tehana. I remarked this to Golonzola, who said that it had always been the express desire of the inhabitants of Neuroomia that their cities should resemble each other as little as possible. The houses were handsome structures, all built of wood, and in line. The buildings were surrounded by spacious gardens, between which were the even streets, overlaid with heavy planking of dark-coloured timber.

On arriving at Golonzola's residence, which was beautifully situated on the banks of a large lake,

and surrounded by trees, I was introduced to his two grand-daughters, also a lady friend of theirs, one Fudelora, a tall blonde, with deep blue eyes and flaxen hair; but what impressed me most was her clear metallic voice, whose accents fell agreeably on the ear. As soon as I saw her and our eyes met, I knew that she would prove an attractable companion. I felt that with her the moments would indeed be possessed of speedy wings. The young ladies accompanied me through the grounds and along the banks of the great lake. Here we spent a happy time till the dining hour approached, when we returned to Zallazélma, as the residence was called.

Again I met many strangers of both sexes, to whom I was introduced, and when I entered the dining hall, I found that there was a large assemblage. I sat next to Golonzola, who in the meantime told me that he was one hundred and ninety years of age, and that he had been governor for a longer period than any man living. His wife was dead, and many of his grandchildren were grown up.

After the meal was over, we went to the ballroom, where dancing was kept up for some time. However, I did not remain there long, and after a

dance with Fudelora and a few others, I sought out my apartments, for I felt tired and sleepy.

Still I lay awake for some time thinking of the events of the past, and when I did fall into a heavy slumber, many beautiful faces presented themselves to my imagination in dreamland. I did not awake till aroused by the tinkling of a small machine in my room.

Now in Neuroomia it is not the custom, except on momentous occasions, to disturb sleepers until they have had their fill, so I knew that some important movement was impending, and was up in an instant.

On going out, I learned that a number of the guests were preparing for a trip to some interesting part in the neighbourhood, and were desirous that I should be one of the company. Of course this was agreeable news for me, so I lost no time in partaking of some luncheon, then mounted my flanilla, and we made a start.

Our route for some distance was through hills and hollows, evidently the result of volcanic agency, the country everywhere being in a high state of cultivation; homestead after homestead, nestling dreamily in the surrounding groves, was passed, and the winding road gradually ascended till we reached the top of what appeared to be a moderately elevated

table-land. Here the houses and tilled fields disappeared, and we found ourselves on a level, barren tract of land covered with low shrubs, while the dark outline of a dense forest stretched along the horizon in front. It was indeed a delightful ride, with Fudelora by my side, and I felt doubly invigorated by the fresh breezes from the ice.

"Have we much farther to go before we make a halt?" I inquired of my fair companion, for I began to think of the animals carrying the provisions.

"Not very far," was the reply. "You see the forest yonder," she continued; "well, we have only to proceed a little distance into it, when we meet the Poroporia, or first great sunk valley. There we shall be staying for some time; indeed, it is very probable that we shall not be going beyond it on this occasion."

"Have you ever been to Tehana?" I asked.

"No," was the answer. "I was born in Orangala, and have never been beyond the borders of the state."

"You are not fond of travelling, then?" I remarked.

"No," she responded; "I cannot say that I am. People travel, I understand," she continued, "in order to enjoy themselves; but if you can enjoy

yourself at home, is not that sufficient?" She went on, "Of course there are many exceptions, but as a general rule the people of Scalascala travel little, in fact, less than those of any other part of Neuroomia."

"They are, then, satisfied with their lot," I observed.

"Undoubtedly," was the answer, "although I do not mean to imply by that assertion that they are more contented or happier here than elsewhere. This part, however, besides being fertile and picturesque, has many natural curiosities, and it is to see the latter that large crowds find their way here every year during the falls. Some remain long enough to become well acquainted, others take wives away with them, so that we have many friends and relations in the distant states and cities. These return, and we are always glad to see them, and look forward to their coming. When are you going to return?" she asked.

"Whenever the *Dorondoro* leaves," I replied.

"Then you will not be able to see much of our territory," she said, "for she does not intend to remain here long."

"I hope to enjoy the privilege in future," I responded, "for I feel that I could be very happy

here for a much longer period than I have to spare at present; but I have promised to return by the *Dorondoro*, and my friends will expect me. However, I intend to have another trip here during the next summer."

Here our conversation was interrupted by the stumbling of one of the animals laden with picnic items. He fell, and the load came to grief. I hurried up to the scene, and with others began to gather whatever eatables were not soiled, and placed them in a fresh pack. I expressed regret to Fudelora at what had happened. She only looked surprised, and observed that trivial accidents of that kind, and over which they had no control, never caused them any concern. Meanwhile, the man who led the animal was patting it on the neck, and appeared to sympathise with it in its misfortune, for both its knees were cut by the hard pebbles.

We entered the forest, which in many respects differed from those of other mountain regions. There was a total absence of undergrowth, and the ground was strewn with small dry twigs and dead leaves. No herbage was to be seen, and the feet of the animals produced a peculiar metallic sound, which indicated the proximity of the rock to the surface whenever they proceeded quickly.

All at once, and without any warning, from the appearance of the adjacent surface, that we were approaching the wonderful, we found ourselves on the brink of the sunk Poroporia Valley. The scene was indeed impressive, rendered doubly so by the suddenness with which it burst upon the view. Towards the right the valley gradually rose in the direction of the distant mountains, but towards the left, as far as we could see, it curved in and out till lost in a haze of blue. The walls, which were composed of different varieties of beautiful stone, were perpendicular in many places for thousands of feet. Their numerous colours glittered in the soft sunlight, and formed a singular contrast to the portions darkened by shade. Numerous streams of clear water poured over ledges and terraces to join the mightier torrent beneath. This river widened out in several places, forming small silent lakes, with roaring cataracts between them.

The spectacle was stupendous, and for a time banished all other thoughts. Although all the members of our company, myself excepted, had on previous occasions visited this wonderful depression, yet they stood and admired as if they had never seen it before.

"I am not surprised," I said, addressing Fude-

lora, "that so many visitors every season come to Scalascala. The wonder is that they have not built homes in this sublime locality."

"The people of Orangala, generations ago," she answered, "decided that no buildings of any kind should be erected near the Poroporia Valley, for they justly considered that the work of man was incapable of adding to its loveliness. They were pleased with it as left by nature, and we of the present day share their opinions."

We again mounted our flanillas, and proceeded for some distance along the edge, in order to find some spot suitable for a temporary camping-ground for ourselves and the animals. This we soon discovered in the shape of a small, grassy pasture overlooking the valley beneath. Here, however, a crowd had already halted, and were enjoying themselves. I at once recognised some of my *Dorondoro* friends among them.

Having dismounted, and released the animals from their burdens, we joined the excursionists, and I met Yeyema, Hitomlik, Delemia, Yondozi, Vandalia, and her mother and younger sister. I spoke a few words to them all, and was in the act of passing over to some one in the crowd, when I almost hit up against Alvarez, who was walking in

the opposite direction. I began to apologise for my inadvertent intrusion, when she smiled in her former enchanting manner, and inquired, though apparently without much concern, if I had wholly recovered from the effects of my experience on the ice. We conversed for a while, and I found her as agreeable as ever. She was by herself, and although I looked about me more than once, I saw nothing of Omalonzi or Estas. This, however, did not cause me any serious inconvenience, and, after doing justice to the good things we had brought with us, took part in their games.

Time wore on, gladness ruled the hours, and many were the loving glances exchanged, when the happy throng were startled by the shrill cry of a human being as in distress. All looked, and some hurried in the direction from whence it came. I happened to be among the foremost, and, on arriving at the edge of a deep and dark gorge, which ran into the great valley itself, I saw the form of a woman, with a child clasped in her arms, hung in the branches of a tree some distance beneath. The woman was still and silent, but the child tossed and moaned occasionally. Ropes were speedily obtained and a man lowered, who made the lady fast to the end of one.

Meanwhile, a woman came running up, and on looking down, suddenly exclaimed, "My child! my child!"

"He's saved," cried some one. "Estas has saved him."

The unconscious lady was brought to the top, and, true enough, she proved to be Estas, who, after all, was not injured beyond hopes of recovery. The child soon followed, and was found to be little hurt.

All was now clear—Estas had saved the child's life at the risk of her own. Indeed, the occurrence was witnessed by a couple of lovers, who happened to be near, and from the young lady, not from Estas, came the cry. It appears that the child in its play was running towards the precipice, heedless of danger, when Estas noticed him and ran to the rescue. She was just in time to take hold of him as he was going over, but was unable to recover her balance, and both disappeared.

It now occurred to me that Dr. Exelexeto was right—Estas, notwithstanding her many drawbacks, had good qualities, in common with the other women in Neuroomia, and here was ample proof that she also possessed noble ones.

The crowd dispersed, and some returned to their former pastimes. For my own part, I preferred to walk alone with Alvarez along the brink of the beautiful valley. We were now on our former footing, and I felt how foolish it was to have grieved so much over her keeping company with Omalonzi, for, after all, there was probably no love between them.

"Have you anything to equal the Poroporia in other parts of the world?" she inquired.

I answered that I must confess I had never seen one on such a grand scale before, and also passed an opinion about the suitability of the vicinity for dwellings.

"I do not think I would like it," she said; "it is too awe-inspiring. Whenever I view it, it draws me towards itself, and at the same time I feel a kind of shrinking from it. It makes me feel so insignificant, so palpably aware of my own littleness, that I feel as if I wished to be away from it, and at the same time causes a melancholy cloud to creep over me, and I feel sad; and yet the sadness it produces cannot be said to be unpleasant. No," she continued, "I would prefer a home in the wild mountains to one in the neighbourhood of this lovely abyss."

"You prefer a rural to a city life, do you not?" I asked.

"Yes," she answered. "There is really too much company in the city, and you have too little time to yourself. Then there is the temptation to visit and receive friends. Time flies quickly, and life is apt to slip by without accomplishing anything. In the country you have time to reflect, and view objects as they were originally designed by Nature, to which the works of man have a constant tendency to revert." She went on, "The country, and not the city, appears to me to be the true home of the human race; life in it is more simple and less artificial than in the large centres of population. And this is well known to our legislators, who are endeavouring to make the cities as like the country as possible. Scalascala, for instance, could hardly be called a city at all."

"Do you not think," I said, "that you are highly compensated for the time you spend with your friends, we'll say in comparative indolence, by the exchange of ideas, which has a tendency, generally speaking, to give an impetus to thought?"

"Very true," she replied. "I believe that limited conversation is essential to progress; and

as for benefitting by the ideas of others, there is little doubt that every one is improved by hearing the opinions of the intellectual. But," she continued, "is it not possible to hear too many ideas, and to spend too much time in analysing them. You will pardon me," she went on, "if I entertain a prejudice in this matter, for I have spent the greater portion of my life in the country, and have got to believe that one is more likely to receive truly great ideas from Nature than from man."

"But in the face of this," I said, "does not the majority of your people possess an inclination to drift to the large cities?"

"No," she replied, in a surprised tone, "it cannot be said that such is the case. On the contrary, it is just the opposite, for by far the greater number choose, and love to live in, the country. Nearly all our gifted men live there; some, indeed, in a seclusion that many of us think unbecoming, and I can safely say that our rulers—with, of course, a few exceptions—spend more than half their term of office at their rural seats."

"It is not so with us," I said; "for it is the ambition of nearly every one to live in or near the great cities, which are growing, in old and new

countries alike, at a rate that is causing serious alarm to many of our ablest politicians. However, I notice that our friends are making preparations to leave, and perhaps we had better return."

"Yes," she replied, "if you do not wish to make the Poroporia your romantic home."

When we arrived at our camp, we found nearly every one ready; so Alvarez joined those friends with whom she came, and I commenced my return journey in company with Fudelora and the others of our party. Having paid little or no attention to this young lady during our stay at the valley, I naturally expected that she might not be inclined to feel so favourably towards me as she had formerly done. Indeed, I felt myself culpable for my negligence. However, to my surprise, I found that it did not make the slightest difference in her behaviour, for she was just as jovial and affable as before.

I now began to discover that jealousy was not one of the traits of character in the Neuroomian women, and to question if it existed among them at all. Hitherto I had seen no indication of it, and the inference from this was that the men could not be influenced by this ignominious passion. As for myself, I knew that it was one of my weak-

nesses, but I would rise above it in future. No Neuroomian, male or female, would be able to detect the slightest sign of this detestable quality in my disposition; I would suppress it in the bud, for no one was benefitted by entertaining it. It certainly was not ennobling, and only made the individual who was foolish enough to give way to it more miserable. Yes, I would banish it for ever, for, to say the least of it, it was childish, and not becoming the dignity that should appertain to manhood.

I was meditating over this and the beauties of the Poroporia, when Fudelora inquired if I ever felt a desire to return to my own land. I replied in the affirmative: that occasionally I wished to be back again, but as time passed I thought less about the matter, for I had always led the life of a rover. I had gone to sea, as we termed it, when a boy, and had been sailing, with longer or shorter intervals on the land, ever since.

"Having led such an adventurous life," she said, "do you not find life in Neuroomia somewhat monotonous?"

"No," I answered. "On the contrary, it is the only land that I have yet visited wherein I have not found existence monotonous. There is neither

the variety of character nor conditions of life here that I have found elsewhere; but, on the other hand, there is a total absence of that grinding struggle for existence that makes life so wearisome in many a beautiful region."

We had now left the forest, and were entering upon the cultivated country, when I noticed that the road was strange to me. I pointed this out to Fudelora, who replied that all was right, and that we were returning by a fresh route, which she trusted would prove interesting. And such indeed was the case, for, on winding through the undulating country, we passed magnificent houses, with their beautiful lawns and gardens, and, at the same time, obtained a clear view of the sea and icefields beyond.

It was here that the idea of settling upon the land first entered my thoughts. Why, life in a situation like this would be ideal! I had an opportunity of seeing more of the country than when we were setting out, and I could not help exclaiming to my charming companion that I now understood why the inhabitants of Orangola were not partial to travelling.

We could now see Scalascala and the beautiful lake of Yallazélma in the distance. On arriving

there, we were welcomed by Golonzola, and, having taken refreshments, the *Dorondoro* passengers began to prepare to leave, for the hour of the vessel's departure was approaching. The Governor drove us down to the wharf, where we again joined our friends and got on board. We had a number of fresh passengers, including those who remained from the last trip and a few from Scalascala. There was waving of blossoming boughs, and bouquets were changing hands; indeed, the former was continued until the *Dorondoro* was well out in the harbour on her return journey to Tehana.

All were gay, the soft strains of music were heard on every side, and dancing and other pastimes were commenced. I saw Omalonzi: he was paying his addresses to another young lady, and I felt glad of it. Still, I did not forget the sadness, however temporary, that Alvarez and himself had caused me before we landed. So I determined to avoid the young ladies during the homeward passage, and keep in the company of my male friends. By doing this, there would be no danger of experiencing disappointments similar to the one referred to. Besides, I now began to take a greater interest in this wonderful country—my future home

—and was anxious to learn more of its history, government, and institutions. So I walked into the library, which was placed on the middle deck, and began to examine a large map, or chart, of the Nocalattan Sea that hung from the walls.

Yeyema now happened to step in, and we entered into conversation. He made inquiries about the extent of my travels in the vicinity of Scalascala, and continued,—

"Being a seafaring man, you doubtless take an interest in maritime charts and drawings."

I replied in the affirmative.

He went on, "We have a large collection in the maritime division of the Tehana library, which you will be able to examine."

"The coast-line of this sea is terribly indented," I said. "The bays and small coves appear to be innumerable, and a piece of straight beach of any important length is nowhere to be seen. Rocks also seem plentiful in many parts."

"Yes," he said. "The configuration is extremely irregular. Still, this is an advantage to the people, for, apart from the diversity of scenery, it affords more room for settlements along its shores,—a circumstance that was once largely availed of; for here, in the earlier history of the

country, the inhabitants made their homes, and attained, to a large extent, the means of subsistence from the adjacent waters. Indeed," he continued, "in past ages the Nocalattan Sea has been a powerful agent in civilizing the people, for it afforded an easy and ready means of communication between the different tribes roving in the vicinity. The exchange of products took place, trade sprang into existence, and the general advancement of the people followed."

"And what do those dark double lines indicate?" I inquired.

"They are the metal or line roads that connect the inland towns with the sea-board, and with one another," he answered. "If you feel so disposed," he continued, "you may soon have a trip on one of them, for after remaining a short time in Tehana, I intend to proceed to Yacla, and if you choose to come, I shall be glad of your company. It will be my last trip of the season."

I agreed to this proposal, and Yeyema went away with his wife and daughter, who came to seek him.

After they were gone, I went out, and seeing Yondozi alone, walked up to where he sat.

"The Nocalattan Sea is well off for rocks," I

said, "and on this account, judging from the chart in the library, should be difficult to navigate."

"Not at all," was the answer. "All the rocks along the route used for ordinary navigation have been removed. There are, of course, many still remaining, but they are to be found in localities not frequently visited."

"Do they ever cause accidents?" I inquired.

"Very few in recent times," was the ready response, "for the positions are well known. However," he continued, "they have been the cause of the death of many in the past, and perhaps the saddest case on record in connection with them is the wreck of the floating village *Yannawanya*, which took place only during the last generation."

I begged him to proceed.

"No one was blamed for this dire catastrophe," he said, "for the rock which caused the calamity had been thrown up during an earthquake, where none had previously existed. The *Yannawanya* was even larger than the *Dorondoro*, and had been fitted up and provisioned for a long cruise among the bays and islands in the southern basin of Nocalattan Sea, a part at that time noted for its wild and rugged beauty, but seldom visited. She struck when nearly every one was asleep, and

shortly after leaving the island of Tooroona, where they had remained some time. It appears that they were treated to a series of entertainments by the people of the island, and were awake attending on these festivals during the whole of their stay. On leaving, they immediately betook themselves to their beds, in the hope of having a long sleep, and, alas! that hope was only too terribly realized. There was just the one shock, and she disappeared, whither, no one can tell, but it is believed that she was drawn underneath partly by the action of a whirlpool. However, be that as it may, no trace of her has ever been found. Of course several spars of the lighter kinds of wood, that doubtless broke off after she struck, have been recovered, and to these the survivors clung till they were seen and rescued."

"How many?" I asked.

"Only four," was the nervous response. "Four out of that vast concourse. The exact number will never be known," he continued meditatively; "but it is believed that about ten thousand persons perished during that lamentable hour. This dreadful event for a time paralyzed the whole nation, and for a long period there was no expedition to the Southern Sea, as it is sometimes called. A more

romantic history, however, belongs to the survivors, who were lovers—two men and two young ladies. Each of the men met the girl to whom he became attached for the first time on board the fated vessel. The four were standing near the stern of the middle deck when she struck, and were thrown clean out into the water. No one saw her going down, for they began to swim with all their strength in the opposite direction. On looking round, they saw nothing where the *Yannawanya* once had been but a few pieces of timber from her upper parts. I need scarcely mention," he went on, "that the impression this sad occurrence left on the minds of the lovers was deep. However, they determined that the event should always remain fresh in their memories, and never returned to their homes or civilization, but chose fresh dwelling-places for themselves on a high plateau, enclosed on all sides by lofty mountain ranges. Here, on the banks of a beautiful fresh-water lake, which they named 'Yannawanya,' they built their houses, and laid the foundations of the city of Yacla. The Government of the day confirmed their choice. Others soon followed, and remained with them, for the climate was salubrious, and the soil fertile. They lived to a ripe age, and now

rest in the land of their adoption; but the city they had founded grew and prospered, and promises, at no distant date, to rival Tehana itself."

"The rock has doubtless been removed," I observed.

"No," was the reply. "It crumbled away, and actually dissolved, by some peculiar and latent agency at present not understood by us. As for the whirlpool, its influence has long ceased to be felt."

"Are there many different kinds of rock in the sea?" I asked.

"Only three," was the answer. "First we have volcanic, like the one in question, then sandstone, but the hardest and most dangerous is that formed by the labours of a small marine insect."

"Coral rocks," I exclaimed. "Why! I had no idea they existed here. In some instances they take interesting and beautiful shapes, resembling plants and other objects, beneath the waters of our warmer seas."

"They alike do the same here," he observed. "And you may see many specimens to the collection I have added to the Geographical Department at Atazatlan."

Here we parted, and I returned to the library

full of thought. Then, choosing a book, I laid down full length on a couch, and read myself off to sleep.

When I woke up, I sought out my room, and prepared for the meal which happened to be ready.

From my window I could plainly distinguish the colours of the wonderful Polar fountain, and from this I knew that we were again drawing near Neuroomia's greatest city. We sat long at the table discussing various events, and on going out, the city was right before us, and the *Dorondoro* bending for the wharf.

After we landed, I took leave of Alvarez, Yondozi, and some more of my friends, who were going to return at once to Atazatlan, then drove with Yeyema to his residence, and once more became his guest.

From the time I first heard Delemia singing, I decided to visit the Tehana theatres on the first opportunity. I made my wish known to Yeyema. He said that he was not going just then himself, as he had State matters to attend to; however, that Vandalia was fond of theatre-going, and would probably be ready to accompany me. She was acquainted with all the principal actors and actresses, also dramatic authors, and would be able to give me introductions.

On interviewing Vandalia about the matter, she was willing to go, but would not be ready for some little time. So I promised to wait, and in the meantime went for a ride in the neighbourhood. When I returned, she was waiting, so we rode together to the "Pondropell."

On arriving in front of a very massive building, we handed the animals to one of the lads in attendance, who took them away to an enclosure reserved for their use.

"Where shall we sit?" I inquired.

"Anywhere," was the quick response. "There will be a number of vacant seats."

We paid with a coin after passing through the wide doorway — tickets not being used, — then mounted about a dozen steps, and found ourselves on another floor, with a large screen or portable door in front. On this were some excellent paintings of celebrated artists and scenery. There was a wide opening on either side, and we passed to the left into the main building. The front, with its pillars and porticos, was indeed grand, and I considered that it probably formed an index to the interior, so that I expected to see something beyond what I had been accustomed in the way of theatres, but I certainly never anticipated such a

gorgeous spectacle as was now presented to our view. The room was lofty, and of stupendous dimensions. There were rows of seats in front, and tiers of seats on the three sides, one rising above the other to a considerable height. The oval roof was supported by golden columns, which ran round the whole building, and the tapestry was of the richest character, and, indeed, ineffable. There were no stalls, pit, or galleries, and no difference in price, the seats being so arranged as to make the matter of choice of little importance.

My attention, however, was attracted by the stage, with its magnificent curtains and hangings. It was now vacant, and we took the first empty seats we came to, Vandalia showing no anxiety to get to the front. Indeed, there were many empty places near the stage, while a number of those near the door were occupied. This surprised me, and I asked of Vandalia, if there happened to be a crowded house, would there not be a rush for the front seats?

"No," she replied. "Some people like to sit near the stage, but others again prefer to be some distance away, while a proceeding of the kind you have mentioned would be considered selfishness on the part of those concerned, and this would not be

to their advantage in the event of there being a full house," she continued. "It is understood that the younger members of the audience shall ascend to the higher tiers, but the management look after these matters when required. Besides," she went on, "there are many theatres in the city which do not differ materially from one another, and as a general rule, the people are not so enthusiastic over the drama as to over-crowd any particular one."

We now heard the strains of music from invisible musicians, and a number of beautiful girls, just budding into womanhood, appeared, as if by magic, on the stage. They were dressed in the most brilliant costumes, danced, sang, and made their exit.

Then Delemia appeared by herself. She was greeted with applause. I learnt from Vandalia that she was the *prima donna* of the company. She indeed looked charming, and sang in her usually superb style. When she concluded, there were evident signs of universal admiration, and the stage was fairly strewn with flowery wreaths.

The singing and dancing, however, were only a preliminary to the opera itself, which represented some historical event with which I was not ac-

quainted, but which evidently took place at a time when the people were less civilized than at present. It, however, proved to be of an intensely absorbing character, and Delemia took a leading part.

At the conclusion, I inquired of Vandalia if the display of passion exhibited were not exaggerated, as it seemed to me not to be in accord with the apparent ease and self-control of the people of Neuroomia. She answered that the artistes always endeavoured to faithfully represent the sentiments and customs of the period to which their drama referred, but at times, notwithstanding the accuracy of their history, it was difficult for them to become acquainted with the incidents that gave tone to events, and the motives that influenced men and manners in past ages.

When we returned, we found Yeyema busy in making preparations for our projected tour to Yacla. I felt something more than a passing interest in this place, and in answer to my friend's query, affirmed that I was ready.

I noticed a nervousness in his actions that I had not witnessed before, nor did he appear to be in his usual spirits. However, I did not think much of the matter, but attributed it to the excitement that some persons are always

more or less addicted to, before commencing a journey.

We drove to a point on the metal lines, and got into an enormous conveyance. The lines were laid much the same as on our own railways. They were, however, much heavier, and farther apart, while there was only one carriage, which appeared large enough to contain half the population of a good-sized town. It began to move at the appointed time, and we soon found ourselves whirling towards the interior at a rate of speed that seemed to me to baffle calculation. The road was by no means even, nor was there any occasion for it to be so, for the conveyance went up steep inclines, and descended their opposite sides, without the least difficulty.

On arriving at the city, we were met by the Governor, Unaloplo, and two of Yeyema's brothers. The former extended us a ready welcome in a quiet, unostentatious manner. Notwithstanding the high position Yeyema held among the rulers of the continent, and his unquestioned popularity, yet at none of the centres we visited was there any demonstration on the part of the people. Still, there was a genuine ring about the simplicity of the receptions that contrasted strongly with the empty

display of hypocrisy and affectation indulged in on many occasions by my own people (I regret to admit it) when paying tribute to their representatives and politicians.

Here I parted with my friend, who took his departure with his brothers to his mother's residence. In the meantime I drove off with Unaloplo, and became his guest. I felt very much out of sorts by our rapid transit. However, I had a glorious sleep, and woke up after a longer repose than usual, feeling soothed and refreshed, and with an inclination to see and learn as much as I could about this romantic territory.

According to previous arrangement, I met and went abroad with Yeyema, who was unusually taciturn, while I, on the contrary, felt excessively delighted at the dreamy beauties of Lake Yannawanya and the vicinity.

After leaving the city, we walked along its banks for some distance, then, turning into a wood, began to ascend a slight eminence. Here Yeyema broke the silence. "I have come here on a rather sad mission," he said; "to visit the grave of my father, and, perhaps, should have left Yacla alone on this occasion, as I always do. However, as you are here, I shall feel a relief in telling you my story."

I begged him to proceed.

"I have observed," he continued, with a certain degree of pride and happiness, "that you entertain what I believe to be a very high opinion of the people and conditions of life here; but although our longevity is about three times that of the inhabitants of other lands, still the end comes, for we are mortals, and it is the regret at losing those we love that makes such a large portion of our lives, that might otherwise be happy, so full of sadness. My father removed here, with his young family, during the time of the lovers, and when there were very few people. Alas! how well I can now remember the many happy years passed with my sisters, brothers, and youthful playmates along the shores of this then secluded lake. But time rolled on here as elsewhere, and when, in due course, it was arranged that I should seek a home for myself, I left my parents, and settled on the land a long distance away from them. Still, I used to return periodically, and was happy, until one summer the bitter fact cruelly forced itself upon me, that he whom I loved was no more. It seemed as if an eagle had driven his claws deep into my heart, and retained his savage grip with a ferocity that extinguished the least hope of it

ever being relaxed. I have felt it from that hour, and I fell it still, and no matter what hopes I realize, or what successes I attain, that wasting pain remains, till eventually it will consume itself."

We had now arrived at the summit, and here, in view of the snowy heights above and the tranquil lake beneath, were a few graves, covered over by unhewn stones, bearing the names and other particulars concerning the sleeping forms they covered.

"There he rests," he said, pointing to the nearest.

I examined the others, and knew they were those of the lovers.

On our way back, he inquired if my parents were living. I answered in the negative, saying that they died while I was still very young, and that I scarcely remembered them at all.

On arriving at Unaloplo's residence we again parted, and he returned to the cottage, saying that he would call for me when about to leave Yacla. I found the Governor to be a quiet, reserved, and, comparatively speaking, young bachelor; yet he was kind and courteous. His tranquil disposition appeared to be more the result of meditation than caution, for he was a deep reader, a profound thinker, and more of a poet than a statesman.

There were no ladies about the place. However, we visited several families together, and I spent many pleasant hours in his company. The city had no regular form, but consisted of buildings along the peninsulas and banks of Lake Yannawanya, in some instances close together, but in others, separated by gardens and grassy lawns.

During one of our walks, I happened to remark that Yacla, considering it had no design, had a very attractable aspect.

"Yes," he answered. "Its founders decided that, as regards design, it should be unique, and our best engineers assert that they can see no way of improving its appearance by any fixed plan. Further," he continued, "respect is due to the opinions and labours of our pioneers."

Yeyema arrived at the appointed time, and then, taking leave of our esteemed host, we returned to Tehana.

CHAPTER VI.

HE ADDRESSES LARGE AUDIENCES.

The sun was now drawing nearer and nearer to the horizon, and his oblique rays appeared to significantly remind us that he would soon be lost to view. Tehana, however, was just as gay as when we left it, and I went from gathering to gathering, enjoying myself and making fresh acquaintances. Still, I felt as if I should like to have something to do. All I had hitherto done, apart from recreation, was to keep my diary posted up. During one of our walks in the neighbourhood of the city, I made my desire known to Yeyema, who approved of the idea.

"Everybody will very soon be at work again," I said, "and I would like to follow their example."

"How would you like to pass the months of twilight?" he inquired.

"I think that I would like to settle upon the land," I replied, "although I have never led that life before."

"Or perhaps you might take charge of one of our large vessels," he suggested.

"Yes," I answered; "but I am not prepared to do so at present, for, in the first place, I have not studied the geography of the Nocalattan Sea; and, again, your vessels are in many respects different from ours, and it would take me some little time to master these details."

"Very well," was the response; "I merely mentioned the matter because I considered it might be more congenial to your inclination than settling upon the land. However, there are several small estates vacant in the neighbourhood, and you may choose one for yourself; you will be charged rent on the minimum scale allowed by our laws. This, however, you will find to be a mere trifle; in fact, you will very probably not be charged for the use of the land at all, as I am almost certain that the legislature shall be willing to take exception to your case. However, I may as well tell you that Onneyubla and myself have already discussed the question of your employment, and the Government have something else in view for you, if it should prove acceptable."

"What is it?" I inquired.

"To write a history of the other continents and

their inhabitants from your own personal knowledge and observations."

I stood still and considered for a moment. Yes, I would do it.

"But before commencing a work of this kind," I said, "it will be necessary for me to become acquainted with the history of this continent; and I understand that you already knew something of the other parts of the world previous to my arrival here."

"Yes," was the answer. "And if we consider traditions, legends, and MSS., together with the opinions of our philosophers, we have quite a collection of books treating on the subject."

"I should like to read them all before commencing the history," I said.

"Perhaps, in that case," he observed, "it would be advisable to take an estate as near as possible to Tehana, so that you can consult the library when you choose without inconvenience. Of course, at the same time, you will have perfect liberty to take any books you wish away from it. You will, however, in all likelihood," he continued, "be interviewed towards the close of the summer by representatives of the press, and if you accede to their wishes, you will find that these interviews

will take up a lot of your time; indeed, it is not at all improbable they will be continued from time to time throughout the whole period of twilight."

"What do you suggest?" I asked.

"That you give a few lectures," was the ready response.

"I would willingly do so," I answered, "but I am a poor speaker, as I have not been accustomed to speaking in public; and further, I am afraid that I shall experience a difficulty in speaking in your language."

"But you will have an indulgent audience," was the reply; "for I am certain the people will appreciate the effort, and doubtless you will improve by practice."

"Then I will make the attempt," I said. "But will not the people be too much occupied to attend during the period of twilight?"

"Perhaps they will," was the answer; "but suppose you give one before the end of the summer?"

"That undoubtedly will be the proper time," I responded. "And am I to deliver the lectures as an employé of the Government?" I inquired.

"If you choose," he answered; "but you will find it much more profitable to give them on your

own account; for if you make the charge for admission ever so small, I am confident that, owing to numbers who will attend, you will be well repaid."

"And the press goes free," I said.

"Always free," was the answer.

"Perhaps," I observed, "it would be as well to commence preparations at once."

"Whenever it suits you," was the reply, "I can make the matter known to the public."

"And what about the subject?" I said.

"Choose whatever subject you please," he responded, "and give yourself a reasonable time to prepare your address."

I thought over the matter, and before parting we fixed the hour for the commencement of my first lecture.

When I got home, I sought out my studio, in order to reflect over this new deviation, and now discovered that I had undertaken a more difficult task than I had anticipated. First, what subject should I choose? I was fairly puzzled about this. It would be of no use referring to the triumphs of the sciences, manufactures, or machinery; for in all these, with the exception, perhaps, of geography, they were far in advance of ourselves. Of course

there were our labour troubles, and other social problems, but I was doubtful if these would prove interesting; and apart from that, I was not desirous of having to say anything in my address that might have a tendency, however slight, of underestimating my own people in their estimation.

At last, however, after racking my brain till I felt giddy, a happy thought struck me—"The American Civil War." It would be interesting, for war was unknown to them, and they had no big guns or men-of-war ships; besides, I would be at home on this subject, for I had taken a part in all the principal battles of that memorable campaign. The next issue of the journals contained notifications of my approaching lecture in Tehana.

When the appointed hour arrived, I appeared on the stage of the largest theatre in the city, and faced an audience of fully twenty thousand persons. I felt the responsibility of the situation, and was extremely nervous. However, with an effort I rose to the occasion, and began speaking. Although I spoke in a comparatively low voice, yet I heard the sound reverberating to a degree that induced me to lower my tone, such were the acoustic fittings of this enormous building.

I commenced by referring to the institution of

slavery, which was the principal cause of the war. Of course I knew that at first they were horror-stricken at the cruelty of a section of my countrymen who prospered by trading in human bones and flesh; but on the other hand, I knew that they could appreciate the magnanimity of the philanthropists, their sacrifices and final triumph in the cause of outraged humanity.

At the close I did not forget to point out that among the civilized nations slavery as a recognised institution had ceased to exist. Then I referred to the black-labour question, still to be solved, and strongly advised them, even if it were possible, never to import "coloured" labour, for it would lead to no end of troubles; and, above all, never to have anything to do with "black-birding." There was no interruption, and no questions were asked; indeed, that vast crowd listened with a silence that was commendable.

During the lecture I noticed several of my friends and acquaintances present. Among them were Onneyubla, Yeyema, Vandalia, Alvarez, Delemia, Yondozi, Hitomlik, Moro, Estas, Arizenda, Banyaba, Folbrizzio, Ilaclatella, Golonzola, Fontin, Unaloplo, Fudelora, and many others.

When I sat down, I was heartily applauded, and,

to my surprise, all the leading journals not only printed the address, but criticised my attempt in a very favourable manner. This, more than anything else, gave me encouragement, and in the end induced me to yield to the solicitations of my friends by promising to give a second lecture.

Onneyubla, and those who came with him, re-remained for a while in Tehana, and were, with myself, the guests of Yeyema. In the meantime I made arrangements to return with them to Atazatlan, where the next address was to be delivered.

We were a merry lot that stepped on board the *Omardank*, bound for the capital city of Neuroomia. Smiling faces were seen on every side, but none brighter than that of the beautiful Alvarez, who kept me company during the greater part of the voyage. She referred to my lecture and the war almost as soon as we met, and said she felt horrified to think that in future she should be compelled to look upon me as a slayer of my fellow-men—one who had actually taken away human life. I told her that I was by no means certain that such was the case; for although I had served in the war, and many lives were lost, yet I was by no means positively certain that I had, directly or indirectly, caused the death of one individual; for

in our battles there was much smoke, and men fired in among their opponents, in most instances over their heads—indeed, many fired anywhere; and even if I had killed several in the manner indicated, which was just as probable as not, with us such a proceeding would not be looked upon as criminal, but, on the contrary, virtuous and patriotic."

"Rather a painful and cruel task, was it not?" she interjected.

"Certainly," I added; "but still necessary in the interests of freedom and justice."

I had some difficulty in persuading her that I was not an assassin. However, she eventually appeared satisfied with my explanation, but deplored the condition of things that rendered such inhuman acts imperative. I was not surprised to find that a naturally sympathetic and noble-minded girl should look upon the atrocities of the battlefield with unutterable repugnance; but when I came to discuss the subject with Onneyubla, I wondered not a little to find that he looked upon war as something worse than a childish evil, and characteristic of the most contemptible imaginations.

"What greater proof could be forthcoming," he said, "of the utter depravity and barbarism of any

people or peoples than that they should have to resort to the fiendish practice of killing one another, in order to settle their disputes? To speak mildly of it," he continued, "it is not ingenious, for the lowest and most despicable of human beings that ever existed could not possibly have hit upon a more infamous institution."

I now began to wax warm on the question.

"It is all very well for you," I said, "to argue in that strain, for in Neuroomia you have but one nationality, but in many other countries the population is of such a mixed character, and the members of the different races have so little sympathy in common with one another, that hostilities on a larger or smaller scale are apt to break out at any moment, and to prevent this, the governments are compelled to support large standing armies in order to preserve the peace among their own subjects."

I further reminded him that all the continents were not like Neuroomia, surrounded by barriers of ice and climatic conditions that bade defiance to the invader; but, on the contrary, the greater portion of their coast lines were bounded by open seas, and exposed to the ravages of nations more cruel and bloodthirsty than the fiercest animals of the

brute creation, and that it was of the highest importance that the more civilized communities should adopt measures for self-preservation against such as these.

It was not, however, till I inquired of him how he would act in the event of another race of people coming to take possession of the land he loved, and to kill or make slaves of the inhabitants, that he appeared to realize the situation as it existed with us. He said that he was forced to admit that in an instance of the kind I had just related, there could be no alternative.

On arriving at Atazatlan, we drove to the palace, and after the usual rest, I began to make preparations for my second lecture. On this occasion, however, I was determined to spare the young ladies the penalty of meditating over the heinousness of war, and also not to give any sketches that might cause them to look upon myself as a savage and criminal, so I chose for my subject, "The Voyages and Adventures of some Great Navigators in Modern Times."

As in Tehana, preparations were made for a large audience, but the attendance far exceeded their calculations, for I afterwards learned there were over thirty thousand persons present, yet there was

abundance of room for all, and no disturbance of any kind.

I commenced with Columbus and the discovery of the New World, briefly referring to the state of the country and its inhabitants when he landed, and contrasted the condition of things then with the vast prosperity and high civilization the greater part of it enjoyed at the present time. Vasco de Gama and his memorable trip to India came next. Then I spoke of Magellan and his wonderful feat, the circumnavigation of our planet, also his discoveries and sad end. I then passed on to Drake and Anson, giving an account of their piratical expeditions, and the manner in which they plundered the defenceless towns along the west coast of America. Time would admit of nothing more than a mere sketch of the lives of Franklin, McClintock, Hall, Parry, and Nares. I dwelt upon the important discoveries of Tasman, the genius, humanity, and sad fate of Captain Cook and La Perouse, paying the highest tribute to the memory of the latter, and at the same time referring to the mystery that surrounded his absence for such a long period.

Breathless, however, was their attention when I began to speak of James Ross, who had penetrated

far to the south, and actually surveyed portions of their remote shores.

I sat down amidst applause as before, and, on joining my friends, was highly complimented by Onneyubla and others. Alvarez and the young ladies with her said they believed that the romantic career of the great mariners compensated in a degree for the uneasiness caused them by my account of the war.

In every way this address was a more marked success than the previous one.

New fields now opened out before me. I felt that I was improving mentally, and began to devote more time to study. The sun, however, would soon disappear. The long holiday was really over, and the people began to return to their various occupations, so it was arranged that I should give no more lectures till the end of the following summer. In company with Onneyubla, I set out again for Tehana, in order to make final arrangements to secure a home for myself.

On our arrival, Yeyema presented us with a list that he had received from one of the Government offices, showing all the available estates in the neighbourhood. We inspected a few. However, I was quite satisfied with the first we visited, for it

was indeed a delightful spot, the house being situated on an elevation, below which the cataracts of the river roared. It was enclosed by a magnificent garden, containing fruit trees and flowers, and was within easy distance of the city. There was a tract of land set apart for cultivation, and a larger one for pasture. We had an agreeable ride home, and the President sailed for Atazatlan.

As I had so much book work to do during the twilight, I decided not to cultivate on a large scale. However, it would be necessary to employ two men —one to assist me in working the land, and the other to look after household matters.

Next time I went into the city, I purchased furniture, cooking utensils, and a stock of provisions.

Having engaged the men, and agreeing to pay them the highest wages going, I started them off with a vehicle full of goods to Raveria, my new home. Then I bought a large collection of books, maps, pictures, drawings, and several other articles of various kinds, to form a library of my own.

I consulted Yeyema about the MSS. that had been found. He informed me that they were in the custody of the chief librarian, from whom they could be obtained on application—that they had caused a considerable amount of discussion and

writing some years ago, but were seldom referred to now. He himself, however, considered them to be of some importance. They had caused him much speculation, and he was glad I had taken the matter up soon, and would patiently await the result of my labours. I interviewed the librarian, and got from him all the books, MSS., legends, etc., relating to the early history of their own country, and also that of the other parts of the world. Armed with this varied assortment of books, etc., and a promise of a visit occasionally from Yondozi, whose vast stock of so many branches of knowledge would be of use to me in elucidating matters that I might not be able to understand, I retired to my country home.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SIFTING OF THE EVIDENCE.

My first care was to see to the improvement of the place. To Bashipolo, my senior employé, was left the matter of attending to the trees, flowers, vegetables, and cereals of all kinds, also the purchasing of animals to stock the land. I found that he was quite at home in working and managing a small estate, and as he was a most honest and truthful fellow, I afterwards became much attached to him.

Illilippli, the manager of my household affairs, was equally well versed in his branch, and things progressed smoothly enough at Raveria.

Having thus attended to outdoor matters, before very long I found myself poring over my books, with no anxieties about the present, and no cares about the future. This was well, for any one who has mental work to do cannot hope to achieve much success if he have any interruptions or annoyances,

I now turned my attention to the manuscripts. The first that attracted my notice was of an intensely absorbing character, and very ancient—so ancient, indeed, that not only had the original long crumbled away, but many of the succeeding facsimiles shared the same fate, the one I had before me being about the five-thousandth that had been taken, and it was calculated that the average life of each manuscript was about twenty thousand years. The original was supposed to have been written by one of the brothers Ylpa, who migrated from Neuroomia in a small vessel of their own, the *Orino*, during one of those terrible earthquakes which at very long intervals of time shattered portions of the great icefield. They sailed in a northerly direction till they came to the shores of another continent, which they explored and sketched, but the coast line, which ran, according to the plan, in a westerly direction for probably three or four thousand miles, was not like that of any of the continents known to our maps. It was evidently the coast of some unknown land, but what land could that be?

Was it all fiction? I asked of myself. No; that was impossible, for several things in the sketch and description proved conclusively that they were not the work of imagination. The capes, headlands,

indentations, and mouths of the large rivers were carefully marked, as were also the hills and mountains near the sea. The inhabitants of this mysterious region, which was known as Arawarria in the native tongue, so the manuscript went on, were highly civilized, and lived under a monarchial form of government. They had great cities, important manufactures, and aqueducts. They were also well advanced in astronomy and meteorology, and, for the purposes of observation, calculation, and experiment, had massive buildings, with high towers, erected on many of the mountains and headlands. Their edifices were of the most substantial character, being built with blocks of a very durable kind of stone. The inhabitants told them that beyond the mountains, and towards the far interior, there were dense forests and great fresh inland seas. Here, secured in their natural fastnesses, lived a powerful, savage, and cruel people, of a paler colour than themselves, obtaining their subsistence by rude cultivation and the chase.

The climate was much warmer than that of Neuroomia, but the people they met led them to understand that in bygone ages it had been intensely cold. The days and nights were of brief duration, and nearly equal in length, which latter fact proved

that the greater part of Arawarria must have been within the torrid zone. The soil was extremely prolific, and in a high state of cultivation, grass, grain, fruits, and flowers being abundant. Animals and birds were also numerous. They had swift and commodious ships; some, indeed, were designed for sailing only, but the majority were propelled by machinery. With these they traded with other great divisions of land, some larger than their own.

The brothers were allowed the privilege of viewing some of their maps, and were astounded at the distance they ventured from Arawarria, and the vast proportions of the land they visited.

I considered it a matter for regret that the brothers had not copied the remainder of the coast-line from the maps shown them. Whatever was their motive, probably a high sense of honesty, they did not do so, for the sketch only showed the part of the coast they had actually seen—the southern portion.

The course of the *Orino* was indicated by a broken line which ran near the shore. This line frequently ran into the coast, showing the places where they had landed. Contrary to what might be expected, however, they seldom entered what

appeared to be the important harbours, but described semicircles round their entrances as they went along, and at the same time keeping well out to sea. Within the curves were small black dots, and the object of the *Orino* was obviously to avoid these.

But what could they represent? No clue as to their nature or use was given, and they were not reefs or isolated rocks, for these were shown by minute curved bars placed closely together. On examining the route, I found that they generally landed at the mouths of small creeks, but always some distance away from the principal harbours and cities.

According to the manuscript, it was the intention of the brothers to explore as much as possible of Arawarria, gather a cargo of interesting and useful objects, then return to Neuroomia. But of course they never returned, nor was it ever discovered what became of them, and their fate must remain a mystery to the end of all time; for it was now impossible that anything could be found to clear up, or indeed throw any further light on the matter. They appeared to have turned the western end of the continent before the manuscript was thrown into the sea, for the sketch curved round,

indicating that the coast line trended to the north and north-east. But whether they examined the remainder of these mysterious shores, and consigned another manuscript to the deep, or whether they remained here, or commenced their return voyage, or departed for some other land, which they made their home, was, of course, a matter of pure speculation. It was not improbable they had got wrecked, for these seas were stormy at times; yet they made no mention of storms, although they referred to a mild and refreshing wind that always blew from the one quarter—the south-east.

This was the whole of the brief manuscript, and that any of the others before me would give any further information concerning the *Orino* and her occupants was altogether out of the question. As regards the continent itself, however, it was quite different, and with a view to learn more of it, I went through the whole bunch; but only one, which I placed aside, made any reference to land existing in the vicinity of where Arawarria should be. I then examined all the books and legends that I thought probable might contain references to the subject. This occupied a considerable time, and I had to write concerning paragraphs and sentences that I did not understand, on more than one occa-

sion, to Yondozi, who always readily came to my assistance. His answers were of considerable help to me, for he had made an almost lifelong study of every branch of the history of his own country.

Replying to my last communication, he pointed out that it would be useless to search further among the books, for the two manuscripts already in my possession were the only original ones that dealt with or related in any way to the great unknown continent. At the same time, however, he neither suggested nor supplied an opinion, but left me to think the matter out for myself.

My experience as a navigator had already taught me the wisdom of not proceeding too hurriedly with questions that demanded subtle investigation, and also made me somewhat cautious in accepting deductions or hastily arriving at conclusions. So I made up my mind to drop the whole affair for the present, and devote my time to growing crops and raising herds.

Bashipolo had some ground prepared, so I planted a number of different kinds of seeds. Having finished this, I set to work and cleared the garden of all weeds, and had many improvements effected. Flanillas, olgommeras, and aleras gazed lazily in the grassy meadows, and appeared to be thriving well. Notwithstanding, however, Illilip-

pli's highly successful management of the cuisine and his patient devotion to domestic affairs, I at times felt lonely, and on more than one occasion the idea of choosing a partner from the young ladies of Neuroomia entered my brain, for I was now fairly settled, and loved my rural home. My comparatively large house had a sound of emptiness about it that I did not at first appreciate, after being accustomed to so much company. However, I got used to it, but still missed my old acquaintances, for hitherto I had no visitors, doubtless owing to the fact that my friends conjectured I was busy over my literary work. I paid a visit to my nearest neighbour, Mitlinnimi, who had a grown-up family of one son and two daughters. The son had left them, and was settled on a place of his own, but the girls still lived with their parents, and as I found them to be agreeable and cheerful, I afterwards spent many pleasant hours in the company of the young ladies. I kept up a correspondence with Alvarez, Vandalia, Delemia, and a few others.

With regard to matrimonial affairs, I was not yet quite prepared to take the step, but the time would come, etc., etc. I had a lot of work before me, and I knew that when I once got fairly into

it I should have quite enough to occupy my thoughts.

After resting for a reasonable time, I commenced the perusal of the second manuscript. Compared to the other, it belonged to a recent period. No date, however, was affixed. Probably there had been one, but no trace of it was now to be seen, for the manuscript was considerably damaged when found, owing to the water having penetrated the case that enclosed it. In this instance, too, I should have mentioned that the original of the copy I held had been converted to dust ages ago. It was the only result, as far as known, of the largest expedition that ever left Neuroomia. The movement took its origin from the enthusiasm of a number of brave and hardy men who were fond of adventure and filled with a desire to penetrate the mysteries of the great ocean beyond and the beautiful lands it was believed to contain. They fixed their ship, the *Valina*, on a huge sledge, and by powerful mechanical appliances managed to drag her over the frozen field. It was, however, a hazardous undertaking, and the men endured terrible sufferings on the ice; indeed, some of them lost their lives there, for the winter had set in before they reached the open sea. The survi-

vors, however, embarked full of hope, and with many promises to the effect that however enchanting the lands they might discover, they would return to Neuroomia, and endeavour to reach the icefield again at the place they were leaving it within a specified period. It was also understood that they would frequently throw manuscripts overboard while prosecuting their discoveries.

This expedition was not altogether a private concern, for it was countenanced and assisted by the Government, who sent exploring parties out on the ice from time to time for a number of years; but beyond the manuscript already referred to, nothing was ever heard of them. This one was the twenty-first they had cast into the water. They were then cruising in an extensive archipelago, the numerous islands of which were but the scattered fragments of a shattered continent, once the home of a kind and prosperous people, which had been reduced by the forces of nature to a condition of semi-barbarism. In some of the islands, indeed, notably those where cities had been left, the inhabitants still retained a portion of the civilization of the departed continent, but in the vast majority they had reverted to the state of the savage. Nor was this a matter for reproach or

wonder, for their fate, in reality, had been an excessively hard and cruel one.

This dreadful occurrence took place ages before, but the details were treasured up in their memories, and handed down from generation to generation with singular accuracy; for wherever the crew of the *Valina* landed, the tale in the main was the same, though in different islands there were many additions and omissions of minor particulars.

For some time preceding the dreadful catastrophe, they experienced frequent earthquakes and unusual meteorological disturbances; gales of a kind unrecorded in previous annals swept over land and sea, committing incalculable havoc, and causing the loss of numberless lives. The tides were of phenomenal height, and ceased to ebb and flow with their former regularity. They submerged whole low-lying tracts, while their heated waters scalded human beings and animals to death, and also withered up all the vegetable life that came within their reach. But the worst was yet to come. The surface of the sun appeared to have undergone a change, and his rays became more feeble, so that the moon and many of the stars began to shine by day. The former appeared to have come closer to the earth, and was sensibly of

greater size than before. Then they saw a huge globe as it were suspended in the heavens and coming towards them, growing larger and larger as it approached. Coming between them and the sun and moon, it totally eclipsed the light of both, yet they were not in darkness, for the strange world—a world they now knew it to be—gave out a peculiar kind of lurid light.

Nearer and nearer it came. The terrified inhabitants were now suddenly invigorated and endowed with extraordinary animation. They had tasted of the atmosphere of another world, but almost immediately there was a vibrating shock, and their continent was shattered, the greater portion of it having been pressed beneath the waters of the ocean. Then, as it were, to complete the work of destruction, volcanic disturbances followed on a scale fearful to contemplate. The sea was agitated, subsidences of the land took place, and islands were thrown up in the ocean.

The survivors could distinctly see the great world that was passing before them, and as it gradually moved away into space, kept constantly presenting a fresh surface to their view. They got a glimpse of its deep valleys, which were of immeasurable proportions, extremely beautiful, and

teeming with many forms of animal and vegetable life; they beheld beings with faces and limbs like themselves, but the size of mountains, and they thought the gigantic strangers looked down upon them with pity as they passed. Many of the animals were even larger than these inhabitants; as for the vegetation, it appeared like hanging forests some distance away from, but yet connected with, this wonderful planet.

They were not, however, allowed to view these things at their leisure, for the earthquakes continued. Portions of the earth's surface were hurled into air, followed by enormous masses of flames. The ocean heaved and tossed, encroached and receded, sometimes reaching the tops of the lower hills, then revealing whole tracts of its mud-covered bed, with the huge monsters that luxuriated therein. The only cities left were those built high up on the mountains or most elevated tablelands; and even these suffered, some of them having been wrecked by the earthquakes.

After a time there was a calm. The new planet kept on its course, getting farther and farther away till lost in space, from which it came. The moon, however, remained nearer the earth than formerly, and gave a stronger light. It was also

said that, through inhaling the strange atmosphere, some of those who escaped death from accident lived for hundreds of years.

The people began to go about in their boats, for they no longer possessed ships. Their continent, however, was broken up, and in such a brief space of time. They only found islands more or less scattered where it once had been. Between these, in many instances, were numerous shoals and currents that rendered navigation difficult and dangerous. This prevented that intercourse which might have saved, for a time at least, the civilization which had received such a terrible blow, and was already tottering.

The manuscript now at some length gave a detailed description of a few of the islands and their inhabitants, from which it appeared that the crew of the *Valina* was much pleased with what they had already seen, and that their voyage had hitherto been a most prosperous one. It concluded by stating they had not forgotten their promise to return.

I now learned, to my chagrin, that I should have read this manuscript first, or, at least, immediately after reading the other, for by so doing I should have spared myself considerable mental effort in

endeavouring to solve the continental problem from the one only. Indeed, had I acted from impulse, as I felt strongly tempted to do, I should have commenced to study it on concluding the former. But I was trying to be methodical and digest every piece of intelligence as I went along. It was now, however, an easy matter to arrive at the only possible conclusion, right or wrong, from the evidence at hand concerning the solution of the continental mystery—Arawarria must be identical with the last continent of Lemuria, of which, according to many of our own geographers, the South Sea Islands once formed a part.

After finding this manuscript, the enthusiasm of the nation was aroused, and several expeditions left Neuroomia for the Northern Seas, all pledged to return. Their prolonged absence, however, caused some uneasiness, and the Government sent out parties of the hardiest men to keep a look-out in the vicinity of the ice; but nothing was ever seen of the wanderers, and only one manuscript was found. It was dropped by the ship *Orobeda*, which had been sailing for some time on her own account. It gave a very gloomy narrative of the voyage, stating that they believed the other vessels of the expeditions, two in number, to have been wrecked.

After leaving the solid mass, great caution had to be exercised to save their vessels from the ice-bergs which enclosed them on all sides. When they got beyond these, they encountered storms of the most violent character, and on several occasions their own vessel was on the point of foundering. It was during this period that they had lost sight of their companions. They had been drenched for days and nights together by chilling rains, and piercing winds tossed them in every direction. When the storms cleared off, they were almost scorched by the rays of a burning sun, from which they suffered more than from the wet weather and storms.

Sickness had now set in among the crew, who were fast becoming aged and withered under their trials, when they beheld the welcome sight of land on the horizon. As they approached it, however, it presented a dismal and uninviting appearance, consisting of low sandy beaches, with numerous sandhills, on which they could see only a few stunted trees and scanty herbage stretching farther inland. They followed the shore for some distance, and at length came to the mouth of a large river, which they entered in the hope of finding a suitable place of shelter for themselves and their vessel.

Their intention was to remain for some time, in order to rest and take in, if possible, a fresh supply of water and food, for their stock of provisions was becoming uncomfortably low.

During their course up the river they saw many groups of natives along the banks. Their skins were black, and they wore no clothing. They belonged to the lowest order of savages possible, and had a very repulsive appearance, yet they appeared to be friendly, though they carried spears, clubs, and axes. The appearance of the country did not improve as they advanced, so they determined to proceed no farther, and cast anchor.

They were now distant two ellos—about four of our leagues—from the ocean. The natives followed the vessel along the banks, and seemed anxious to trade with them. They brought edible plants and roots, for which, in exchange, they received ornaments. Nearly half the crew went ashore to explore the neighbourhood, and, as they anticipated no treachery on the part of the natives, were unarmed. They were, however, taken on some pretext to an ambuscade a little distance away, and there instantly butchered with spears and axes in the very presence of their comrades, who were unable to render assistance, owing to the large

number that had now gathered with the object of capturing the vessel. Fires were at once lit, and the bodies of the slain were torn to pieces and thrown on them to roast. Very soon the savages were seen greedily devouring the partially singed limbs.

In the meantime spears were being hurled at the ship, which they began to surround in their canoes, and it was only after several thousands had been destroyed by the bombs thrown from the vessel that they retreated, and then only to make further preparations to renew the attack. The remaining crew, however, managed to raise the anchor and get to sea without further trouble.

But they had already experienced more than enough, and had commenced their homeward voyage, broken down by hardship, when the little case enclosing the manuscript was consigned to the custody of the fickle waves and currents.

This curbed the spirit of adventure in Neuroomia, and although many generations had passed away since the sad event narrated above took place, no one had since ventured even to cross the icefield. This was not owing to fear, for the Neuroomians are brave; but they considered that there could be nothing in the other parts of the world worth risk-

ing their lives to reach, and also that the members of the many previous expeditions had probably perished. They turned their attention to their own continent, which this last piece of intelligence concerning another land made them love all the more.

I now proceeded to read the remaining manuscripts, but they were of a far too legendary character to make any reference to in my historical work. My next task was to read a brief history of Neuroomia, for to read the ordinary one would be a matter of years, and very probably unnecessary for the purpose I had in view.

A history of the world on the first reflection sounded a big concern to accomplish within a limited period. After a time, however, probably through thinking over the matter, it did not appear quite so formidable. My plan was to sketch a history of each continent, beginning with Africa.

After getting a start, I got fairly absorbed in my labours, which by no means proved disagreeable. However, I considered it would take a far greater time than I had at first calculated, and at one time there appeared to be little prospect of getting beyond two or three, at most, of the continents. However, I worked steadily at it, making a headway that astonished myself; but at the same

time I found it to be tiring and wearisome, especially when I kept closely confined to the work for lengthened periods without diversion, and was very glad when my friend Yondozi appeared on the scene. I showed him the result of my seclusion as far as I had gone. He appeared pleased with it, and gave me some valuable suggestions, saying that what the Government and public would appreciate was exactness in every chapter, and that it would be better to omit a circumstance or event rather than hazard a guess. He also stated that he could understand the difficulty under which I laboured, writing wholly from memory, and if ever I should happen to be doubtful about date, place, or number concerning any event, it would be better to state the fact in every instance.

I now decided to take a brief holiday, and we went over the grounds together. The seeds I had sown were growing well, and, thanks to the instructions of Bashipolo, I was acquiring a knowledge of farming and grazing that proved doubly acceptable and interesting after my confinement indoors.

CHAPTER VIII.

VISIONS OF ANOTHER WORLD.

WHEN Yondozi was leaving, I accompanied him, by way of change, to his residence on the island of Moolooba, where the principal observatory in Neuroomia is situated. I had already heard much of the institution, and took advantage of this opportunity to visit it. We left Tehana in the *Berero*, a small vessel owned and navigated by Yondozi himself. On crossing the Nocalattan Sea, we entered a narrow channel in a wild and isolated part of the country. This led us into a large semicircular gulf, out of the middle of which rose an island with sides of almost perpendicular cliffs. It was, however, not of great size, and from the farthest end towered a lofty mountain.

"That," said Yondozi, looking towards it, "is the Berero Mountain; from it I named my vessel."

We steered round to the opposite side, then entered a pretty little harbour, with stone piers and narrow shores covered with pebbles and shells.

I was surprised to learn that it had been hewn out of the solid rock by the Neuroomians ages ago. There were appliances by which we could ascend from the harbour to the observatory in a very brief space of time. However I preferred to walk, in order to see more of this stupendous structure. The steps, which were cut out of the cliff, went zigzag up the mountain, at the top of which was a broad fenced-in avenue, surrounding the observatory itself, which appeared to be as high as the mountain, and built of the most durable metals found on the continent.

We began to ascend the enclosed stairs, which wound round and round the building, itself circular in form. At certain intervals were small platforms that led to rooms on different floors. We entered a few of them; some were almost empty, but others, again, were filled with machinery, in which, however, I took but little interest.

On reaching Yondozi's quarters, the first room we entered (his studio) was well stocked with books, maps, diagrams, and mathematical instruments. It could not, however, be said to have had a tidy appearance, for books and instruments were happily mixed up together on tables and shelves as if they had been recently used. After examin-

ing the contents of this room, we passed into an adjoining one, where we took refreshments; then he showed me a third, which he used as a bedroom. The next apartments above us, he said, were the chief astronomer's, and the highest in the edifice. These, he continued, would probably prove the most interesting to me; so we ascended to them.

All the rooms we entered, except this one, were lit up by a soft kind of electric light. Yet, in this respect, the astronomer's studio could not be said to be defective; for, apart from the strong light of the moon, there were several meteor-like illuminations in many parts of the sky. These, at intervals, made it almost as bright as if it were day. There was one occupant, a very aged man, in the room. He sat at a large circular table in the centre, and was surrounded by huge, cannon-like instruments, pointing in every direction of the heavens, and projecting far beyond the dome that served as a roof. There were also many smaller instruments, books, and manuscripts on the table near him. Yondozi introduced me to Pondropell, the chief astronomer of Neuroomia, and then returned to his own studio. Pondropell said that he had heard of my arrival in Atazatlan, that he was glad I called, then begged me to take a seat.

I now had an opportunity of having a good view of my new and distinguished acquaintance. His long hair and beard were quite white; yet he was of full countenance, and his eyes, which were large and thoughtful, retained all the clearness and brilliancy of youth. After a few casual observations about unimportant matters, he inquired if our scientists were far advanced in astronomy. I replied that as yet I could not speak comparatively, but was of the opinion they were. "The principal planets and their movements were well known to the ancients," I said. "Yet it was only within modern times that really great progress had been made."

I now happened to look at one of the instruments. This led to an inquiry on his part if ours were like them. I answered that I had seen instruments like some of those before, but that the majority were strange to me.

"The large ones," he said, "are used for viewing the most distant planets, and members of other systems."

I observed that the movements of the distant planets were well known to our astronomers, who could calculate them with great accuracy. Yet they were wholly in the dark as to whether the

great orbs (the moon, perhaps, excepted) were the seat of animal life, and inhabited by rational beings like ourselves, or merely huge, cold, inanimate globes, doomed to wander through space from time everlasting.

"We have solved that problem—at least, as far as Mars is concerned," he answered complacently.

I started.

"Do you mean to imply that Mars is really inhabited?" I asked.

"You shall see for yourself," was the reply.

Then, leaving his seat, he pulled at the handles and wheels of one of the instruments till he brought the bore of it immediately opposite the planet in question, which was shining at that moment with unusual brightness.

"You may look at it through this," he observed, "and I will regulate it to suit your vision."

I did so.

"Now tell me what you see," he inquired.

"I see a large, luminous globe," I replied, "apparently emitting millions of rays of light.

He worked at the wheels. Plainer and plainer the planet became, till I could distinguish mountains, valleys, forests, and seas. And oh, how beautiful! My eyes drank in, as it were, yet with

an insatiable thirst, this glimpse of another world, and I became unconscious of the surroundings.

"I see a city," I absently exclaimed, and was startled by the sound of my own voice.

"Take good note of it," he said, letting go the instrument, "for it will soon pass away, as the planet is revolving."

These remarks of his awakened me from my stupor. But I did not shift my gaze, for, most wonderful of all, there were human beings. How fair and happy they looked in their enchanting world! How I longed to be with them, and felt inclined to rush through the instrument to get there. There were lovely children, and men and women in their prime, but no aged among them. No chilling snows or glaciers on their lofty mountains, and there could be no depressing heat in their fairy-like valleys, for the inhabitants looked so healthy and cool. They wandered along their rivers and streams, while on the banks of the lakes I could distinguish many dwellings. I could also see, in the groves, along the hillsides, and between the shining waters, the many edifices of the city.

But it passed away, and mountains and forests again took its place. Such enormous forests! how they swarmed with animal life, and what wonder-

ful forms the denizens took! Here were monsters so unwieldy that they seemed not to care to move; while smaller animals again, endowed with a curious vitality, kept constantly leaping, running, and climbing. The variety of birds appeared to be endless: and how large and brilliant many of them were! Occasionally a human being would move among them. The indifference, however, with which his presence was regarded by the denizens of the forest was simply charming.

I again heard the voice of Pondropell, this time advising me to cease looking, as it was a great strain on the eyes, and might do them an injury. However, I took no notice of him, and never moved a muscle; whereupon I heard a sharp click, and all was darkness.

I now raised my head, but could see objects only very indistinctly, and felt paralysed by what I had seen. I became giddy, and Pondropell assisted me to a seat near the table. He then left the room, but soon afterwards returned with a vessel in his hand. Holding it to my lips, I drank, and felt much better. But still my eyes were very painful.

"You have looked rather long for the first time," he said kindly. "I should have closed it

before. However," he continued, "you will get accustomed to it gradually, and, after a time, will feel the effects but little."

"Yes," I said, by way of response. "But tell me that what I saw was real; pledge me there was no deception in the matter."

He gave me a surprised look, and was silent for a moment; then quietly remarked, although not altogether in his usual tone,—

"The scientists of Neuroomia do not try to deceive."

"Pardon me," I said, "but I cannot yet realize it all,—it seems so much like a dream. I did not make the remark reflectively, but felt it would be a relief if you confirmed what I saw."

"I can imagine that now," he said, in his usual sympathetic voice, "and accept your explanation. What you have seen is indeed wonderful," he went on; "but if you feel interested, as I doubt not you do, the things to be learnt about this bright wanderer of the heavens are even more wonderful than all you have beheld. However, you appear to be uneasy; the shock and the effects of the instrument have proved too much for your strength. We shall go down to Yondozi, and dine with him."

I replied that already I felt better, and rose to

accompany him. He said that we could be let down to his floor; but I insisted on walking. On reaching the studio, however, I felt well—only a slight soreness in the eyes. Yondozi welcomed us, and the astronomer, in a few words, explained that the instrument had affected my eyesight, and that he himself was to blame for it.

"I guessed as much," said the geographer, smiling. "However, it is nothing serious," he continued. "My own eyes have been frequently affected by the continued use of optical instruments."

Saying this, he led to the dining-room. And it appeared as if we had been expected, for his attendant had prepared for three. We sat down, and before the meal was over I felt as happy as usual, the mellow light of the electricity appearing to be rather beneficial than otherwise to my eyesight. The conversation turned upon Mars and its inhabitants, during which I inquired if the other planets were also inhabited.

"I can only answer that question with regard to those nearer the earth, and then only indirectly," was the reply. "It is believed that these are inhabited by races of people living under more happy conditions than ourselves. However," he con-

tinued, "with reference to the outer and more distant members of our solar system, we are unable, as yet, to say whether they possess animal life or not. It is only in respect to Mars alone," he went on, "owing to its proximity to the earth, and the ease with which it is examined, that we have been able to gather details."

"Instruments are being prepared at present," interjected Yondozi, "in the hope of bringing the more distant planets nearer to view."

"Has this wonderful state of things, in connection with the planet I have just seen, been long known to you?" I inquired.

"It has been known to the astronomers of Neuroomia for the last few million years that Mars was the seat of animal life," was Pondropell's reply.

"And do they differ essentially from ourselves?" I asked.

"Yes," was the answer, "most assuredly they do, for it is almost a certainty that they are immortal."

"Immortal!" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he said. "It is believed that they can be killed by accident or mutilation. However, this seldom happens, and if left unmolested, their

bodies waste not, neither do they become aged nor infirm, and they never die."

Here I interrupted him.

"Do they increase?" I demanded.

"Yes, certainly they do," he responded.

"There is a natural increase," I said, "and no deaths. Mars must surely become over-populated. (I had the over-population question in view ever since I heard of their immortality.) Why, it would only be a question of time for the population to increase so as not to leave standing room for them on the dry land!"

"If you will permit me, I will explain further," he added. "Your inference," he went on, "would undoubtedly be correct, were it not surrounded by other considerations that modify the condition of affairs. There is another luminous planet, compared to which Mars in size is a mere speck, and yet hardly less beautiful than the latter, which comes from the unfathomable depths of space at long intervals of time, calculated to be somewhere about one hundred thousand years, curves round Mars at almost touching distance, then wanders back again in the direction from whence it came, and is lost to view for the period mentioned. Now," he continued, "it is during the time that

this strange planet, we have named Marini, is describing its curve round, and in such close proximity to Mars, that large numbers of the people leap or fly, by means of some peculiar apparatus, to the former, and are carried away with it to the vast unknown."

"That is exceedingly wonderful," I said. "But I suppose it is one of those strange means by which Nature has arranged to make provision for her progeny."

"I differ from you," was Pondropell's quick remark. "You surely do not mean to imply," he continued, "that it is for the convenience, or to relieve the population of Mars, that this strange planet makes his periodical visit?" He went on, "I never heard this population question raised before in connection with Mars, and why the people leave that delightful orb is at present a mystery to us. It cannot, however, be on account of it possessing a redundant population, for we know from observation that such is not the case. One hundred thousand years have nearly elapsed since Marini departed, and his re-arrival, therefore, may now be considered near at hand; yet you saw yourself the great forests and extensive tracts of beautiful territory almost uninhabited. Surely this does not

appear as if any troubles were to be apprehended from an excessive population, even if there were no means of leaving it!"

"Pardon my interruption," I said. "But I cannot understand why a portion only should leave and the others remain, as appears to be the case. If the strange visitor presents inducements and happiness not to be found on Mars, the wonder is the whole do not leave the latter. If, on the other hand, the conditions of life are less favourable, it is equally strange that any should depart."

"That is indeed a very pertinent question," he observed, "and one that has been attracting the attention of our astronomers for a considerable period; but I cannot answer it, as we have been unable, as yet, from the meagre data we have of the last emigration, to solve the problem ourselves. However," he continued, "we have now new and more powerful instruments for observing the approaching event than our ancestors had for noting similar ones in the past, and it is intended to make lengthened and careful observations from many different stations simultaneously, when it is hoped that the question to which you have referred, and many others equally important, concerning both planets, will be cleared up. It is, however, worthy

of note," he went on, "that on the last occasion Marini approached Mars, no children, none indeed but adults, were seen to leave the latter. From this fact, our scientists are of the opinion that the people must live a certain time on that planet, or, in other words, be of a certain age before they could exist on the former; and, if this be true, there would be, of course, only a limited number take their departure at one time."

"But supposing," I observed, "that, through accident, insufficient time, or some other unforeseen occurrence, some of those willing or anxious to go were left behind?"

"In that case, I suppose," he said carelessly, "they would have to wait for the reappearance of Marini!"

"But would that not be a very long time?" I queried.

"You forget," he said, "that they are immortal. Time is nothing to them; they could live for ever on Mars."

"Have you been able to discern," I asked, "if the strange planet is peopled by human beings peculiar to itself, or only by those from Mars?"

"One of the most wonderful circumstances connected with it," he replied, "is that, when last

witnessed by our astronomers, no evidence of the existence of animal life was observed. Yet they themselves noted that it was quite possible for portions of it to contain vast populations, without being detected by them. Their account of it says that the surface is very irregular, and that mountains, valleys, and oceans are in proportion to the size of the great orb itself. I should also have added," he continued, "that it was only when a certain portion of its surface was facing or opposite a well-known locality in Mars, that the people were seen to alight on the former. However, it is drawing near our resting hour, so I shall retire, and leave you with my friend here."

On saying this, and wishing me to look in again, he took his departure.

After he had gone, I casually remarked to Yondozi that I felt interested in his friend, and the revelations he had made.

"He is a most learned man," he said, "and a capital fellow into the bargain. I have known him a long time. We all look up to him on account of his age, good qualities, and vast and varied knowledge."

"Has he been long in this establishment?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "He has been chief astronomer for about one hundred and thirty years."

I wondered I had not met him before.

"He seldom goes into company," was the response, "for he is fond of study and seclusion."

"Of course he is a bachelor," I interjected.

"Yes," was the answer; "and very likely to remain one, for he is now over two hundred years of age."

"And do you think his life of celibacy has been a happy one?" I inquired.

"I have no reason for thinking otherwise," was the reply. "He has been happy enough ever since I first knew him. Of course it might have been otherwise had he not been employed. He, however, is, and always has been, an enthusiast over his profession; and his dearest wish now is to live to witness the return of that wonderful planet Marini. And I can safely say it is also the wish of the whole nation. He has made preparations for the event on an exhaustive scale, and if he lives to manage matters, and carry them out as he anticipates, it is expected that many important discoveries will be made."

We now turned into our beds, and very soon afterwards I was fast asleep.

When I woke up, I found that Yondozi was gone, and on going out, found him at work in his studio. He said that he was preparing the results of his last expedition for the press.

We were now, however, interrupted by the attendant, who announced that "everything was ready."

When the meal was over, he said it was his intention to proceed to Atazatlan in the *Berero*, and, if I chose to go with him, that he would visit some of the interesting places on our route.

I replied in the affirmative, and then took leave of my learned and aged friend, Pondropell.

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE IN THE COUNTRY.

We first went round the Gulf. Its shores were very rugged and beautiful, but quite uninhabited. On drawing Yondozi's attention to this, he said the land was not of a fertile description; also that the locality was far removed from the populous centres. "Nevertheless," he went on meditatively, "it is rich in minerals, and I suppose they will be extracted some day; that is, if they should be required. However," he continued, "we shall now make for Cliff Harbour, as it is called. It is on our way to Atazatlan; yet I have not been there for a long time, and it will be new to you."

Saying this, he dexterously turned the vessel round, and made for the entrance. Passing through it, we steered along the coast for some distance, then entered a narrow inlet, which he said led to the Harbour; a little while longer, and we were in a smooth sheet of water, surrounded by precipitous cliffs.

Of course it was wonderful, and I believe that my friend expected to see me very much surprised, for, previous to entering it, he made no reference as to the character of Cliff Harbour. However, I had now become used to witnessing the wonderful and unexpected; so I gazed with apparent indifference at the cliffs, but made no inquiries. Yet it was quite plain they were solid gold, yellow and black in colour. He steered the *Berero* almost beneath them, and I could now distinguish several rocks of many other metals.

We did not attempt to land, but proceeded right round it—it was metal everywhere—then out again.

"If it were possible to communicate with the other continents, we could give them abundance of that commodity," he said, looking in the direction of the gold.

"Yes," I replied; "but in that case I am afraid it would not be sought after so much by my countrymen, for the very large quantities you have here would diminish its value. It is partly on account of its scarcity that it is so valuable in other parts of the world; however, there is no doubt that a few ship-loads of it would be very acceptable to them at the present time."

"Now for Blossom Bay," observed Yondozi, as we were drawing near a number of rocky-green islets, above which hovered swarms of sea-fowl.

We passed through the intricate and narrow channels between them. Meanwhile the *Berero* twisted in and out, going at times with great speed, at others very slowly; in some places abruptly diving forward, in others gliding along as if she were a living fish in the water.

We passed the entrance to Blossom Bay, and drew in closer to the shore, turning in and out till we found ourselves in a winding channel, apparently running inland. This we followed for some distance, till I could distinctly see land immediately ahead.

"Why, we have come to the end of the passage," I observed.

"No," was the answer. "It is only an island."

On reaching it, I saw two very narrow inlets, one on either side. We entered the larger one, and proceeded very slowly, for there was only sufficient room for the *Berero* to get through. However, we managed it, and were in Blossom Bay, which had more the appearance of a lake than an arm of the sea. It was completely enclosed by foliage, which drooped down from a great height into the water.

There were, however, no blossoms to be seen, as it was the wrong season for them. Nevertheless, it looked a charming, dreamy little place, and any one could picture to himself what it would look like when the summer arrived.

"Rather pleasant, is it not?" remarked Yondozi. "It is very much admired by the ladies," he continued. "Strange to say, however, it is not frequently visited."

He steered to the centre, then out again into the Nocalattan Sea, and we continued our journey to Atazatlan.

We were now well out from the shore, and it was well known that the remainder of our route to the city was free from rocks. So he arranged the machinery, and took a seat on the deck. I joined him, with the intention of indulging in the luxury of a smoke.

The sky above us formed an impressive spectacle, so silent and clear with its millions of brilliant wanderers; besides, there were many strange lights constantly changing their position and varying their hues, becoming at times large enough to cover a considerable portion of the heavens, then diminishing to a degree that rendered them almost invisible, perhaps wholly disappearing, while fresh

ones continued to come into existence in parts where none were previously seen. The atmosphere was sharp and bracing, possessing a degree of transparency unknown in the lower latitudes, thereby rendering the tranquil worlds above us objects of ineffable beauty and loveliness.

"Your astronomers," I observed, "have natural advantages for contemplating the mysteries of the universe that ours cannot possibly enjoy."

"Yes, quite true," he replied; "but, on the other hand, your sages have a wider field for observation and experiment."

Here I took the opportunity to inform him that I was not a scientist, and that my knowledge of astronomy was confined to the art of being able to determine the latitude and longitude of any given place, and to this, perhaps, might be added a smattering of that all-absorbing science that I acquired through reading books at sea.

"I can understand that," he replied; "but you take an interest in this subject, and that fact alone would cause you to acquire a certain knowledge of it unconsciously and without effort. Further," he continued, "I have little doubt you have many learned men among your people who have never made a special study of this important branch of

science, but who, nevertheless, through their love for it, possess a general knowledge equal to many of your professional astronomers; at least, such is the case with us, and many important discoveries have been made by these patient observers."

I admitted that it was so with ourselves, and said that ever since we left Moolooba I had been thinking much of the planet Mars and its happy inhabitants, and would be extremely pleased to learn whatever he knew or conjectured about the origin of animal life, taking, for instance, that of the people of our own earth.

"I cannot speak with any degree of certainty on the matter," he said, "but our astronomers have been of the opinion for a very long period that animal life was conveyed to our world, in the first instance, through the medium of another member of the universe, which, at some remote time, came into contact with our own planet."

"Is it probable there was a collision?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered; "and that occurrence may account for such a vast portion of the earth's surface being covered at the present day by the waters of the ocean."

"Is it likely they came from Mars?" I inquired.

"It is not known from what world they came,"

was the reply. "Probably not Mars, however, for it is believed that wanderer has never been sufficiently close to this earth to admit of it. No," he continued, "our astronomers cling to the belief that animal life was primarily transferred to our orb from one of those planets that, like Marini, move in a highly eccentric orbit, and only approach the earth at intervals of time almost too long for the human mind to conceive."

"Our ancestors, then," I observed, "in all likelihood came from some planet whose less fortunate inhabitants, unlike those of Mars, are mortal."

"It by no means follows," was the answer,—"at least, such is our opinion,—that because we are mortal, those from whom we have originally descended should be so; that is, previous to them becoming denizens of this earth."

"But supposing it were possible for some of the inhabitants of Mars to visit this earth, how would they fare?" I inquired.

"We believe that they would no longer be immortal," was the reply. "They would be affected by time in a similar manner to ourselves. Of course, it is not implied that they would not live longer than our own people; they might live for a thousand, or, for that matter, ten thousand years,

but there would be an end. Mortality is peculiar to this earth; everything is undergoing a change."

Here Yondozi left his seat to attend to the vessel, for we could see Atazatlan in the distance.

On landing, we repaired to Onneyubla's Palace, and had an interview with the President. It was not my intention to remain long in the city on this occasion, for I was anxious to return to my country home, in order, if possible, to complete my historical work before the end of the twilight.

The Omeropelliba, or Neuroomian Parliament, was, however, in session, and, on the invitation of Onneyubla, I decided to pay it a visit and hear the orations

Now, from what I had already seen of the men and systems of Neuroomia, I expected to hear eloquent speeches of a thrilling character. In this, however, I was sadly disappointed, for, during the time I was present, no speeches were made, the members discussing what appeared to me to be unimportant measures in a conversational style.

I inquired of the President if this was the usual manner of proceeding in passing their laws. He replied in the affirmative, whereupon I gave him a concise account of the Parliaments of other

lands, and referred to the eloquent addresses delivered by gifted speakers on momentous occasions. He made a few inquiries, principally concerning the subjects of their debates, then answered,—

"We have no abuses of the nature to which you refer to call forth eloquent appeals from our legislators for reform. Those impressive speeches of your orators appear to have been directed against some monstrous miscarriage of justice, cruel tyranny, the oppression of the weak, or the corruption of systems and individuals. Our representatives, however, have no occasion to appeal to sympathy or passion, for our systems are the result of experience, and work well, while all our social changes are very gradual, and even if there should be a defect, through oversight in a new law, our people understand this, and are slow to take advantage of it."

I met Alvarez, and went for a walk with her to our favourite retreat. Every one, however, appeared to be more or less occupied, so I prepared to take my departure. Before leaving, Onneyubla, Yondozi, Alvarez and other ladies promised to visit Raveria before the beginning of summer.

On reaching my rural abode, I again took up my literary work with renewed vigour. Chapter after chapter was ended, and long before I had antici-

pated, the whole was concluded, and ready for publication. I found the latter part of the occupation a most enjoyable one in a quiet way. The loneliness I experienced after commencing it vanished, and I found agreeable company in my work. Besides, I got to love the rural obscurity of the surroundings, and possessed no desire to commence another long holiday.

I now devoted the whole of my time to the improvement of my homestead and lands. There was abundance of outside work to keep me well employed. Everything appeared to prosper, and my life in the country was surrounded by circumstances in the highest degree encouraging. The grain crops were beginning to ripen, and the fruit trees were already laden with blossom. Clouds now made their appearance in the sky, and were beautifully illuminated by the sun, which was still below the horizon, yet it was evident that he would soon make his appearance, for it was becoming almost as bright as day.

I had two zealous assistants in Bashipolo and Illilippli, who took considerable interest in the improvement of the estate.

Everything was in readiness when the visitors arrived. The ladies took possession, in a pro-

prietary manner, of one part of my establishment, while my male friends and myself occupied the other. There was an equal number of each sex, and be it said to the advantage of the fair ones, that none of them appeared to have sinister designs on my liberty.

During their stay, however, I spent most of my time in the company of the charming Alvarez, while Onneyubla, who seemed to be a confirmed, though somewhat ancient, flirt, was almost constantly by the side of the fascinating Delemia. In the meantime, my old friend Yondozi was consoled (that is, if he required any consolation, of which, by the way, I am doubtful) by the sweet Vandalia, and with her visited all the romantic places in the neighbourhood.

Previous to leaving, some one proposed a short visit to the mountains in the vicinity. A certain locality was chosen, and on arrival, the animals were liberated, and the company scattered. Alvarez and myself ascended one of the higher peaks, and rested on the summit.

"We shall not have to wait long," she said, "for see how bright the sky is becoming."

"What lovely colours! I never saw a sunrise like this before," I answered. "It surpasses the

most beautiful I have ever witnessed on the ocean."

The singing and screeching of the birds were almost deafening, and the smaller animals quitted their winter abode, running and frisking about in the most joyous manner. Brighter and brighter it became, and higher and higher in the sky ascended the wedge-shaped illuminations.

"The first ray!" she exclaimed, pointing to the top of a high tree.

We now took a fresh seat, and watched him clear the horizon. It was a glorious and welcome sight after such a long absence.

CHAPTER X.

THE FATE OF THE *PENGUIN*.

THE question of sending an expedition to the scene of the recent volcanic eruptions was discussed by the executive Government at Atazatlan during the early part of the summer. That one, on a small scale, should leave for the purpose of examining and reporting on the changes in the surface of the country in the locality of the earthquake had been a foregone conclusion some little time previous to my arrival in Neuroomia, and had been delayed last summer owing to the time taken up over the trip to the *Penguin*. Now, however, the project assumed greater proportions, for it was decided, not only to visit the scene of the earthquake, but also the neighbouring icefield, in order to ascertain if the open channel caused by the thermal current still existed. It was to discuss this subject that Onneyubla sent for Yondozi and myself. After some friendly exchanges, we repaired to the

Geographer's room at the palace, where the council was to be held.

"Ever since the *Penguin* reached these shores," observed Onneyubla, "many suggestions have been made concerning the fitting out of an expedition from Neuroomia to visit other lands, and I am inclined to favour the project, for if one ship can arrive here, it is not, I think, unreasonable to suppose that another might be able to depart, and now seems an opportune time for that purpose."

"If the channel is still free from ice," I said, "it should not prove a very difficult task to navigate a vessel to the open seas beyond; but the return journey might prove a hazardous undertaking, for the channel may be frozen over."

"The Government have already had several offers from sea-faring men who are anxious to join the expedition," was the reply, "and it appears to me quite possible they may be able to return in safety, for the country will make strenuous efforts to keep a close look-out for them when they might be expected to return."

I must confess that I did not at first relish the idea of sending an expedition, for I thought it possible they might wish me to take charge of it, a pleasant enough venture, if there happened to be

any prospect of returning, but this, however, notwithstanding the President's sanguine expectations, I considered to be very remote.

Onneyubla now came to the rescue by stating that in the event of the departure of an expedition, it was not the desire of the Government, unless I expressly wished it, that I should accompany it.

I replied that I had no longing to leave Neuroomia at present; that I was very happy here, indeed; that it was questionable if I could be more so elsewhere.

Yondozi here interjected that he was ready at any moment to set out to examine the channel and icefield, with a view to ascertain if it were possible for a ship to get through. I observed that I should like to be one of his party, and to this he readily agreed. I was anxious to go with him, partly on account of the change, and partly in the hope of learning something of the *Penguin*.

"If the vessel should manage to clear the ice in safety, would it take them long to reach another continent?" inquired Onneyubla.

"No," I answered. "Australia and South America are not far distant, and perhaps they could make Tasmania or New Zealand in even a shorter time. However, I will undertake to pre-

pare a chart for them, showing the positions of those lands."

"That will be a step in the right direction," he said; "and if they have a prosperous voyage, I am in hopes of them returning during the following summer. We intend to send our unknown friends a cargo of gold by way of introduction," he continued.

"In that case," I answered, "it would be advisable not to dispose of it all at one port, but to call at all the Australian capitals, which they would find a very easy matter after reaching one, for there was much traffic between them, and I could promise the visitors a hearty reception from them all."

"That is satisfactory," he replied, rising. "I will now leave you to make preparations for the land expedition, and you may start at your convenience."

This was addressed to Yondozi and myself, who were left alone.

"Perhaps it would be as well to lose no time in the matter," said the Geographer, who was quite enthusiastic over the affair.

"I have partly made arrangements already, and all that we can do now is to fix the hour for departure."

We decided on an early one, and parted.

"You have no idea how I long to join that expedition, and see other lands and seas," said Alvarez.

"I presume there are many more young ladies who would enjoy that privilege," I answered.

"Yes," she responded; "and we have just interviewed the President about the matter. He will not give his consent to any ladies leaving on this occasion," she continued. "Nor will he bind himself in the future; but he promised that if the vessel should return in safety, and another expedition organized, the question of taking young ladies and their friends or relatives would be considered."

"It would be very agreeable," I said, "if everything went smoothly; but on the other hand, it is not at all improbable that you would be compelled to become inured to dangers and discomforts, in which case the voyage might prove the reverse of what you anticipate."

"I have not promised myself a life of ease on board," she answered emphatically. "On the contrary, I have made up my mind to encounter stormy weather and many trials; and cannot we women endure hardships as well as the stronger sex? Our work might not be quite so serviceable,

yet we would do our best, and in time could learn to become navigators. No," she went on, "it would not be my desire for everything to go smoothly, for in that case trips might prove monotonous; and if the worst should come, what would it mean? Why, nothing more than the parting from that strange thing we call life, a process which all our ancestors have experienced, and which we shall eventually have to undergo in any case, and which I trust we fear as little as they."

"What about the land expedition?" I interjected. "Perhaps he would be willing for young ladies to accompany it."

"He should be, at least," she answered; "and I will see him about the matter."

Saying this, she made her exit.

On going out into the grounds, I saw Yeyema and Vandalia coming to the palace, and went to meet them. Yeyema informed me they were aware of the intended expedition in Tehana, and had come to Atazatlan in the hope of inducing the President to join him in forming a monster one to the volcanic regions, whose surface had recently undergone a change, but where all was now quiescent. A visitor who had just arrived from those parts had told him that the scenery was indescribably beau-

tiful. Waterfalls on the grandest scale possible had come into existence, lakes and ravines were numerous, and the precious things and secrets of the interior of the earth were thrown to the surface. Vegetation was growing with unprecedented rapidity, and this was now by far the most wonderful territory in Neuroòmia.

Alvarez now joined us, and on arriving at the entrance, Yeyema and Vandalia passed in towards the reception-room. I suggested a walk to the romantic valley. On the way she gave me an account of her last interview with Onneyubla. With regard to ladies accompanying the land expedition he would take no action, but leave the matter for Yondozi to decide, who she knew would be averse to the proposal on the ground of the delay it might cause. However, she and many others had already decided to pass the approaching falls of this season in the mountains, by way of atoning in a measure for the disappointments she had experienced.

On our return to the palace, there was evidently much more stir than when we left it. Numbers of visitors were arriving and leaving, while many appeared to be busy. We knew that something unusual was about to take place.

Yondozi noticed us approaching, and advanced

towards us. He said the hour fixed for departure had been postponed, but that he did not regret it, for the members of the expedition were to be increased considerably, and would include Onneyubla, Yeyema, and a number of ladies.

Alvarez was overjoyed at this, and went off to seek her companions. Preparations were continued for some time, but at last all was ready, and the great cavalcade moved slowly away from the palace, headed by Onneyubla. There were no conveyances, for they would be useless in the mountains; but every one had a flanilla to ride, and there was a number of spare ones driven in a herd. Many also were packed, and led by young attendants.

"This is what I call life," observed Alvarez, who was now by my side; and more than once during the journey I felt the force of the remark, for everything was beautiful, and the sun warmed up the world. The aged were as gay and happy as the young.

Our route was to be the same as that traversed by Yondozi and myself some time previously; so we made for the opening in the hills. Our camping places, previous to going to rest, were enlivened by songs, speeches, recitations and theatrical entertainments. Not the least charming among the performers was the attractable Delemia,

who sang as sweetly as before. Our magnanimous leader and president was gifted with unusual vigour, and appeared as if he had discovered and drank of some unknown fountain of youth. He flirted and sang, and frequently told amusing stories of his already long and uneventful life.

Time passed rapidly, though we travelled but leisurely, and at length we got a glimpse of the frozen expanse ahead.

Here a separation took place, for it was decided that Yondozi, myself, and a few of the young men should proceed, lightly equipped, to examine the icefield, while the main body of the expedition went along the heights in a different direction towards its destination, the locality shattered by the earthquake, where it was arranged they would await our return.

Some little time after parting from the others, I found that I had forgotten the small waterproof case containing my diary, so I lost no time in going back for it, while Yondozi waited. On my return, I observed that I could not understand how I had forgotten it.

"It may have all the better luck," he jestingly replied. "But what do you mean to do with it?" he asked.

I answered that if the channel were still open, I would send it with the expedition, but in the event of it being blocked by ice, it was my intention to carry it to the outer border of the field, and consign it to the waves, in the hope of it floating to some other land.

"Our greatest trouble will be on the frozen field," he remarked, "for I fear it will be intensely cold. It is somewhat early in the season to remain there very long. However, I have not the least doubt we can weather it all right."

We travelled as fast as it was safe for the animals to go over the broken surface, making for the hill from which I last saw the *Penguin*. On ascending it, we could see nothing but the irregular mouth of the channel, which did not appear to have altered much since I last beheld it. On scanning the horizon with our glasses, however, we could see a little dark protuberance in the far distance, and the channel was open as far as we could see.

"This is indeed encouraging," observed Yondozi. "There is abundance of room there for a ship to pass through. Our expedition will be a success."

"Yes," I answered; "and the *Penguin* must have cleared the ice with little difficulty."

We now descended, and, forming a camp, be-

gan to construct light sledges from the portable materials the young men carried with them for the purpose. These being completed, four of us set out, each in a separate sledge, carrying water and food for himself and his flanilla.

This mode of travelling was new to me, and proved by much the most delightful I had ever experienced. The animals were, comparatively speaking, fresh, for they had been kept in reserve while we travelled with the expedition. They glided, rather than ran, along the ice, and we made tremendous headway. On more than one occasion I gave vent to my curbed spirits by indulging in prolonged shouts, which contrasted weirdly with the silence of this desolate yet awe-inspiring region that now surrounded us. Our plan was to keep some distance away from the channel, striking it at intervals, and make a more careful survey, if possible, on our return. Once we stepped from our sledges to examine it. Yondozi began to be more thoughtful, for it appeared useless to proceed any farther, as the banks of ice were so close at the top as to be almost touching.

"A vessel could not pass very well through there," he said, pointing ahead.

I agreed with him, and began to think of the

Penguin; then carefully surveyed the distance, in the hope of seeing a mast. This, however, in a moment, I considered to be folly, for I knew that if no accident had happened, and if not delayed, they must be at their destination before now.

"That dark object must be some huge monster lying asleep on the ice," I said; "for it has not moved since we first noticed it."

I again applied my glass to it, and Yondozi followed my example.

"Rather large for a seal or bear," he observed. "Looks like the hull of a vessel."

"And no other than the *Penguin!*" I exclaimed.

"They have got blocked in the channel," he said, "and perhaps have perished."

"No!" I responded. "They had abundance of provisions, and must be there still."

"They have suffered from the cold," he said.

"Yes," I replied. "But they took a good supply of firewood with them."

We lost no time in getting into our sledges again, and allowed the animals to go at their highest speed in the direction of the vessel.

Septimus would now certainly be reduced in command; as for Skinny, he would probably lose office. I kept my eyes constantly on the ship;

the sails were set, yet I could see no signs of life on board. Was it possible they had abandoned the vessel, and returned to the land? Hardly, I thought. They would probably remain till the summer.

We got alongside. She was frozen in; yet everything was in perfect order, and the vessel appeared as if she were still the abode of people. They must be asleep in their bunks.

I should here mention that I had long given up the idea of punishing Septimus for his misconduct, intending only to take the command, which I had no doubt he would be willing enough to give up to me. Indeed, from the time I recognised the vessel, I felt sure that he would be glad to see me again, and for my own part I was overjoyed at the idea of meeting them. Skinny had always been faithful, and Sifton, the other seaman, had discharged his duties well. However, I would give them a surprise; so I hurried to the bridge, and shouted out in a loud, if not musical, voice, "Captain Septimus Adolphus Robinson"; but no "Aye, aye, sir," was forthcoming. I repeated the name, but all was silent. So I stepped down to the deck, where Yondozi was standing, and we went below. Here a pitiful scene was presented to us. At the

foot of the ladder was Septimus, lying at full length, and looking as before, but I knew that he was dead—frozen to death. We went farther, and proceeded to the galley, where we found Skinny sitting in an upright position, leaning his back against the wall, and facing the fireplace, but life was gone; while beside him, lying on the floor, was Sifton, but he, too, was no more. All was now clear. They had exhausted their stock of firewood. The last pieces had been placed on the grate. It was probably then that Septimus left his place to secure a fresh supply from cases and other sources, and was going on deck when he fell.

Poor Septimus! he was indifferent to office or position now. There was evidence to show that both he and Skinny had acted their parts well, and the other had proved a faithful adherent to them. They had lived cordially together, and died together. Love of home had induced them to enter on the perilous journey that led to their destruction. They were greater patriots than myself.

"What is to be done?" I inquired of Yondozi.

"We can do but little now," he replied. "The *Penguin* has been their home and their grave, and why should we disturb them?"

"I know they loved her," I observed.

We removed them, and, wrapping them in canvas, conveyed each to his own bed. I cannot tell why, yet I laboured under the belief that they would sleep sounder here than elsewhere.

Our sad mission was now ended. There was nothing more to be done but to visit the outer edge of the field, and then return to the land.

Signed,

CAPTAIN MONTAGUE PERIWINKLE, 1891.

THE END.

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